

Mrs. S. G. Martin.

Mrs. S. G. Martin.

Mrs. S. G. Martin

Mr. Jessie B. Martin

Newark

146 N. Main St.
Jan 6 - 1887

Ohio

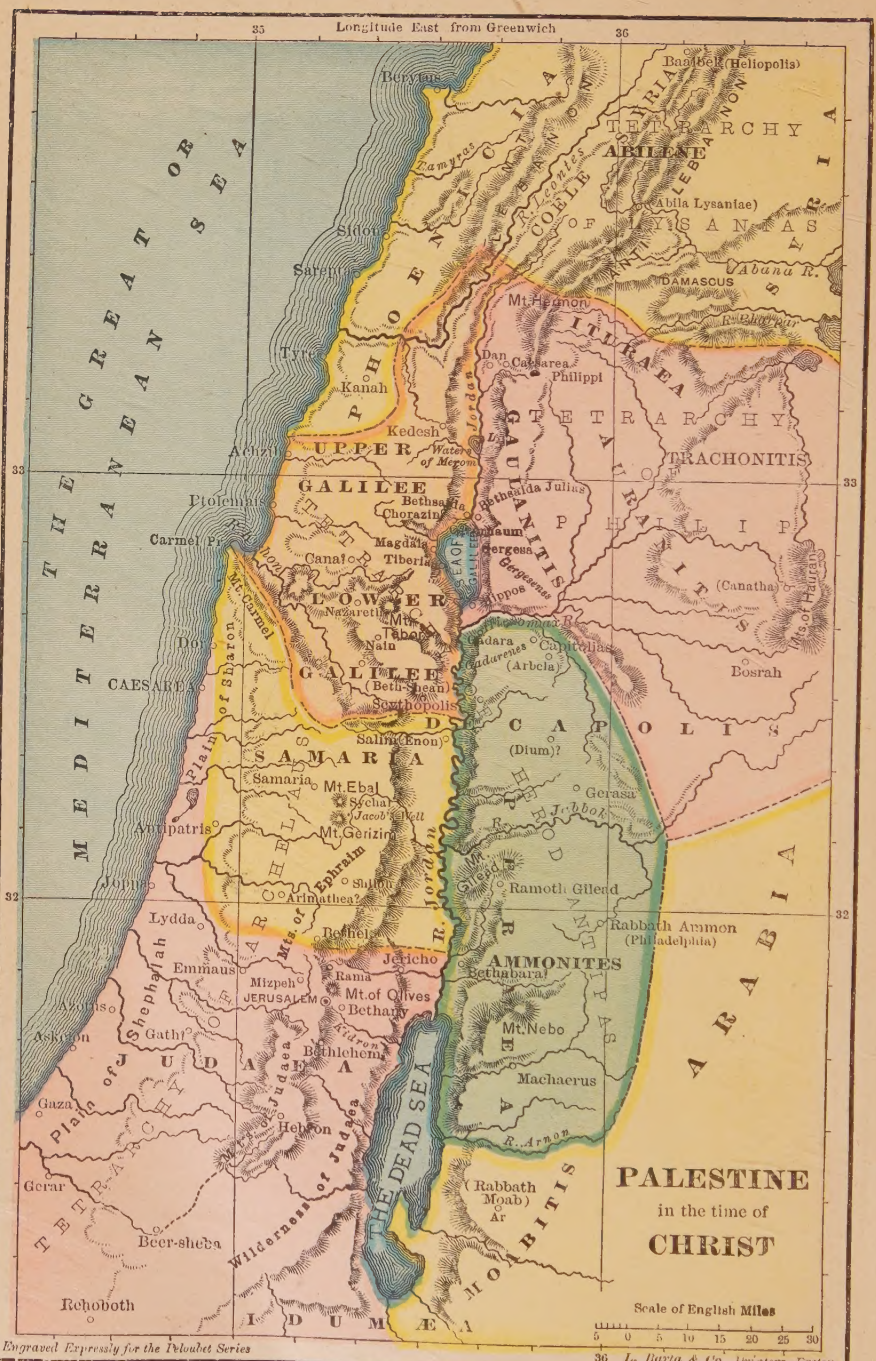


My Aunt, My
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" Maud Bragg

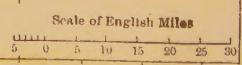
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Longitude East from Greenwich

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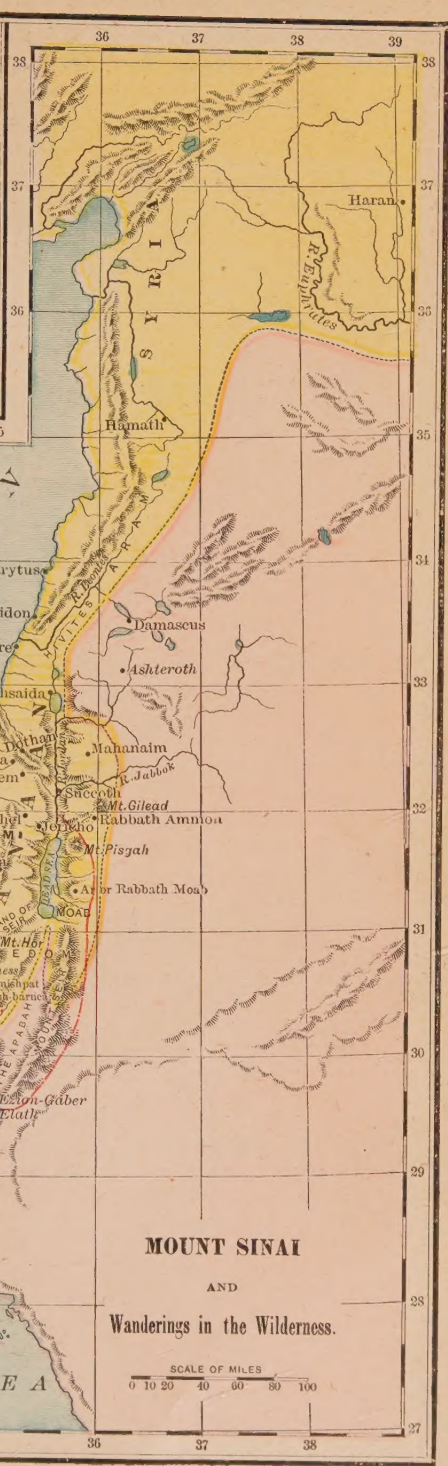
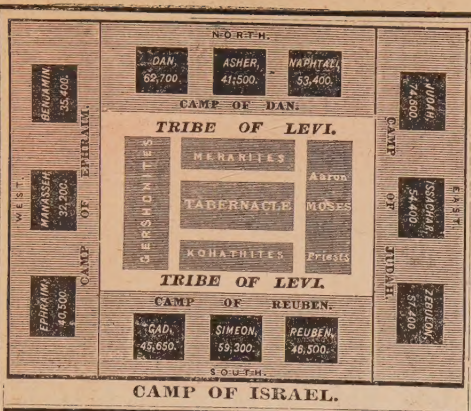


PALESTINE
in the time of
CHRIST



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SELECT NOTES.

A COMMENTARY

ON THE

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS

FOR

1888.

EXPLANATORY, ILLUSTRATIVE, DOCTRINAL, AND PRACTICAL;
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS, AND CHRONOLOGICAL
CHARTS, SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS,
AND LIBRARY REFERENCES.

BY

REV. F. N. PELOUBET, D.D.,
AND M. A. PELOUBET.

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.
STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT,—EXODUS TO RUTH.

BOSTON:

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CLASS RECORD.

DIRECTIONS.—Put in a simple line | for absence, and a + for tardiness. If desired, the amount, or fact (c), of contribution can be put in, which will of itself prove "presence."

Class ----- of the ----- Sunday School.

Teacher, -----

Number.	ADDRESS.	NAME.	JANUARY.				FEBRUARY.				MARCH.				APRIL.				MAY.				JUNE.				
			1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10	17
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15																											
Average attendance for the quarter																											

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Class _____ of the _____ Sunday School.

Teacher, _____.

Number.	ADDRESS.	NAME.	JULY.							AUGUST.							SEPTEMBER.							OCTOBER.							NOVEMBER.							DECEMBER.												
			1	8	15	22	29			5	12	19	26			2	9	16	23	30			7	14	21	28			4	11	18	25			2	9	16	23	30											
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Average attendance for the quarter																																																		

OLD TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY.

PLACE.	EVENT.	YEAR OF THE WORLD.	YEARS BEFORE CHRIST.
		A.M.	B.C.
Eden.	Adam and Eve created	1	4004
"	The Fall	1	4004
"	Murder of Abel	129	3875
"	Death of Adam	930	3074
"	Translation of Enoch	987	3017
"	Birth of Noah	1056	2948
"	THE FLOOD	1656	2348
Egypt.	Founding of Kingdom of Egypt		
Chaldea.	Founding of Chaldean Empire	1718	2286
Babylonia.	Confusion of tongues	1757	2247
Arabia.	Death of Noah	2006	1998
"	Job		
Chaldea.	Birth of Abraham at Ur	2008	1996
"	The call of Abraham	2083	1921
Canaan.	Abraham and Lot move to Canaan	2086	1918
Hebron.	The covenant with Abraham	2092	1912
Sodom.	The destruction of Sodom	2107	1897
Moab.	The birth of Isaac	2108	1896
Jerusalem.	The sacrifice of Isaac	2133	1871
Lahai-roi.	Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah	2147	1857
Beersheba.	Birth of Jacob and Esau	2166	1838
"	Death of Abraham	2183	1821
"	Selling of the birthright	2199	1805
Peniel.	Jacob wrestles with the angel	2265	1739
Dothan, near Shechem.	Joseph sold into Egypt	2275	1729
Egypt.	Joseph in prison in Egypt	2285-8	1719-16
"	Joseph made ruler of Egypt	2288	1716
"	Jacob comes into Egypt	2298	1706
Goshen.	Death of Joseph	2369	1635
Egypt.	Birth of Moses	2433	1571
"	The choice of Moses	2473	1531
Arabia.	Call of Moses	2512	1492
Egypt.	The plagues of Egypt	2512-13	1492-91
"	The Exodus	2513	1491, April
Arabia.	The coming of the manna	2513	1491, May
Mt. Sinai.	The giving of the law	2513	1491, May
"	The golden calf	2513	1491, July
"	The tabernacle set up	2514	1490, March
"	The ceremonial law given		1490, April, May
Des. of Paran.	The wanderings in the wilderness	2513-2553	1491-1451
Mt. Hor.	Death of Aaron	2552	1452, Summer
Kadesh.	New start for Canaan	2552	1452, April
Meribah.	Waters from the rock	2552	1452, April
The Arabah.	The fiery serpents		1452, September
Moab.	Balaam's blessing		1452, Autumn
Mt. Nebo or Pisgah.	Death of Moses	2553	1451, February
Near Jericho.	Passing over Jordan		1451, April
"	The fall of Jericho		1451
"	Defeat at Ai		1451
Shechem.	Reading of the Law at Ebal and Gerizim	2553	1451, Early Sum'r
"	Death of Joshua	2577	1427
Canaan.	Oppression of Chushan-Rishathaim during the last years of Joshua, 8 yrs.,		1435-1427
"	First judge, Othniel. Rest for 40 years		1427-1387
"	Oppression by the Moabites, 18 years		1387-1369
"	Second judge, Ehud, delivers them. Rest for 80 years		1369-1289
"	Third judge, Shamgar		
"	Oppression by Jabin, king of Canaan, under his general, Sisera, 20 yrs.,		1289-1269
"	Deliverance by Deborah and Barak. Rest for 40 years		1269-1229
"	Oppression by the Midianites, 7 years		1229-1222
"	Deliverance by the fifth judge, Gideon		1222
"	Rest under Gideon, 40 years		1222-1182
"	Ruth		1222-1182
"	Rule of Abimelech, 3 years		1182-1179
"	Judgeship of Tola, 23 years		1179-1156
"	Judgeship of Jair, 22 years		1156-1134
"	(Of which the last 20 years synchronized with the first 20 of Eli's judgeship.)		1154-1134
West Israel.	Oppression of Philistines, 40 years		1134-1094
"	This period includes the last 20 years of Eli		1134-1114
"	It also included the first 20 years of Samuel		1114-1094
"	And the judgeship of Samson		1116-1096
East Israel.	Oppression of Ammonites, 18 years		1134-1116
"	Jephthah's judgeship, 6 years		1116-1110
"	Ibzan's judgeship, 7 years		1110-1103
"	Elon's judgeship (in part), 9 years		1103-1094

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST (From Andrews).

PLACE.	EVENT.	TIME.	PLACE.	EVENT.	TIME.
Jerusalem.	Annunciation to Zacharias.	October, 6 B.C.	Perea.	Jesus is told of the murder of the Galileans by Pilate; parable of the fig-tree; healing of a woman eighteen years sick.	Nov.-Dec., 29 A.D.
Nazareth.	Annunciation to Mary.	April, 6.	Jerusalem.	Fest of dedication; visit to Mary and Martha; the Jews at Jerusalem.	December, 29 "
Hebron.	Birth of John the Baptist.	June, "	Perea.	Jesus dines with a Pharisee, and sends the lost sheep of the house of Israel beyond Jordan; parable of the unjust steward, of the lost sheep, of the lost piece of silver, of the unjust steward, of the rich man and Lazarus.	" 29 "
Bethlehem.	The angel and the shepherds.	December, "	Bethany.	Resurrection of Lazarus; counsel of the Jews to put him to death; he retires to Ephraim.	Jan.-Feb., 30 "
Jerusalem.	Presentation of Jesus.	February, "	Galilee to Perea.	Sojourning at Perea; the Passover at hand; journeys on the border of Samaria and Galilee; the Pharisees and publicans teaching the unjust judge, and of Pharisees and publicans teaching the laborers in the vineyard; blessing of children; the young ruler, and parable of the fig-tree; second purification of the temple; return to Bethany.	Feb.-Mar., 30 "
Egypt.	Flight of Jesus into Egypt.	May, 8 A.D.	Jericho.	Jesus again announces his death; ambition of James and John to go to Jerusalem; Zaccheus; parable of the pounds; departure to Bethany; and anointing of Jesus by Mary.	March, 30 "
Nazareth.	Return to Nazareth, and sojourn there.	June, "	Bethany.	Supper at Bethany, and anointing of Jesus by Mary.	Sat., Ap. 1, 30 "
Jerusalem.	John the Baptist begins his labors.	July, "	Jerusalem.	Entry into Jerusalem; visit to the temple, and return to Bethany.	Sun., Ap. 2, 30 "
Wilderness.	Baptism of Jesus.	August, "	"	Cursing of the fig-tree; teaching in the temple; parables of the two sons of the wicked husbandman, of the king's son, attempts of his enemies to tangle him; the poor widow; the Greeks who desire to see him; a voice heard from heaven; departure from the temple to the Mt. of Olives; discourse respecting the end of the world; return to Bethany; agreement of Judas with the priests to betray him.	Mo., Ap. 3, 30 "
Bethabara.	Jesus tempted in the wilderness.	September, "	Perea.	Jesus seeks retirement at Bethany.	Thurs., Ap. 4, 30 "
Galilee.	Deputation of priests and Levites to the Baptist.	October, "	Jericho.	Sending of Peter and John to prepare the Passover; the paschal supper.	Wed., Ap. 5, 30 "
Jerusalem.	Feasting at Cana; Jesus' ministry; cleansing of temple.	November, "	Bethany.	Events at paschal supper.	Thurs., Ap. 6, 30 "
Judea.	Jesus begins to baptize (by his disciples).	December, "	Jerusalem.	After supper Jesus foretells the denials of Peter; speaks of the coming of the Comforter, and ends with prayer.	Thurs., eve, April 6, 30 "
Samaria.	Jesus departs into Galilee, through Samaria.	January, "	"	Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane.	Thurs., eve, April 30 "
Macherus.	A few weeks spent by Jesus in retirement.	February, "	"	Jesus is given into the hands of Judas.	Thurs., eve, April 6, 30 "
Galilee.	The Baptist imprisoned.	March, "	"	Jesus is led to the house of Annas, and thence to the palace of Caiaphas; is condemned for blasphemy.	Fri., 5-6 A.M., April 6, 30 "
Capernaum.	Jesus begins his ministry; healing of the leper.	April, "	"	Mockeries of his enemies; he is brought the second time before the council, and thence taken before Pilate.	Fri., 5-6 A.M., April 7, 30 "
Galilee.	Calling of the four disciples; healing of the paralytic.	May, "	"	Charge of sedition; Pilate attempts to release him, but is forced to scourge him, and give him up to be crucified.	Fri., 6-9 A.M., April 7, 30 "
Capernaum.	Return to Capernaum, and healing of the leper.	June, "	Bethany.	Jesus is crucified at Golgotha.	Fri., 12 M., April 7, 30 "
Galilee.	Healing of the corn, and healing the man with withered hand.	July, "	"	Upon the cross is reviled by his enemies; commends his mother to John; darkness covers the land; he dies; the earth shakes, his body taken down and given to Joseph, and laid in his sepulchre.	Fri., 3-6 P.M., April 7, 30 "
"	Healing of the blind, and raising of the widow's son.	August, "	Jerusalem.	Resurrection of Jesus, and appearance to Mary Magdalene.	Sunday, 9 A.M., April 9, 30 "
Capernaum.	Message to Nain, and raising of the widow's son.	September, "	Emmaus and Jerusalem.	Appearance to the two disciples at Emmaus; to Peter and to the eleven at Jerusalem.	Sunday, P.M., April 9, 30 "
Sea of Galilee.	Jesus anointed by the woman, a sinner.	October, "	Galilee.	Appearance to the apostles and Thomas.	Sunday, April 16, 30 "
Capernaum.	Healing of the blind and dumb possessed; charge of the Pharisees.	November, "	Mt. of Olives.	Appearance to seven disciples at Sea of Tiberias, and to 400 at final appearance to the disciples at Jerusalem, and ascension to heaven.	Apr.-May, 30 "
Sea of Galilee.	He casts out devils by Beelzebub.	December, "	"	"	Thursday, May 18, 30 "
Capernaum.	Teaching of demoniacs in Gerges and Capernaum.	January, "	"	"	"
"	Matthew's feast; healing of a woman with issue of blood, and raising of Jairus' daughter.	February, "	"	"	"
Nazareth.	Healing of two blind men, and a dumb possessed; Pharisees blaspheming.	March, "	"	"	"
Macherus.	Second visit to Nazareth; sending of the twelve.	April, "	"	"	"
Bethsaida.	Death of the Baptist; Jesus returns to Capernaum.	May, "	"	"	"
Capernaum.	Crossing of the sea, and feeding of the 500; return to Capernaum.	June, "	"	"	"
Capernaum.	Discourse respecting the bread of life.	July, "	"	"	"
Capernaum.	Jesus visits the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; heals the daughter of a Syrophenician woman; visits the region of Decapolis; heals one with an impediment; is tempted by the Pharisees; their hypocrisy; crosses the sea; heals blind man at Bethsaida.	August, "	Calvary.	Jesus is crucified at Golgotha.	"
Capernaum.	Jesus returns to Capernaum; is tempted by the Pharisees; their hypocrisy; crosses the sea; heals blind man at Bethsaida.	September, "	"	Upon the cross is reviled by his enemies; commends his mother to John; darkness covers the land; he dies; the earth shakes, his body taken down and given to Joseph, and laid in his sepulchre.	"
Capernaum.	Healing of a lame child.	October, "	Garden near Calvary.	Resurrection of Jesus, and appearance to Mary Magdalene.	"
Capernaum.	Jesus teaches the twelve; Pharisees ask him to eat of tabernacles.	November, "	Emmaus and Jerusalem.	Appearance to the two disciples at Emmaus; to Peter and to the eleven at Jerusalem.	"
Capernaum.	An adulteress is brought before him; attempt to stone him; healing of a man blind from birth; return to Galilee.	December, "	Galilee.	Appearance to the apostles and Thomas.	"
Capernaum.	Final departure from Galilee; is rejected at Samaria; sending of the twelve.	January, "	"	Appearance to seven disciples at Sea of Tiberias, and to 400 at final appearance to the disciples at Jerusalem, and ascension to heaven.	"
Capernaum.	Jesus attended by great multitudes; parable of the good Samaritan; healing of a dumb possessed man; renewed blasphemy of the Pharisees; dining with a Pharisee, Jesus rebukes hypocrisy; parable of the rich fool.	February, "	"	"	"
Capernaum.	Healing of a dumb possessed man; renewed blasphemy of the Pharisees; dining with a Pharisee, Jesus rebukes hypocrisy; parable of the rich fool.	March, "	"	"	"
Capernaum.	Healing of a dumb possessed man; renewed blasphemy of the Pharisees; dining with a Pharisee, Jesus rebukes hypocrisy; parable of the rich fool.	April, "	"	"	"
Capernaum.	Healing of a dumb possessed man; renewed blasphemy of the Pharisees; dining with a Pharisee, Jesus rebukes hypocrisy; parable of the rich fool.	May, "	"	"	"
Capernaum.	Healing of a dumb possessed man; renewed blasphemy of the Pharisees; dining with a Pharisee, Jesus rebukes hypocrisy; parable of the rich fool.	June, "	"	"	"
Capernaum.	Healing of a dumb possessed man; renewed blasphemy of the Pharisees; dining with a Pharisee, Jesus rebukes hypocrisy; parable of the rich fool.	July, "	"	"	"
Capernaum.	Healing of a dumb possessed man; renewed blasphemy of the Pharisees; dining with a Pharisee, Jesus rebukes hypocrisy; parable of the rich fool.	August, "	"	"	"
Capernaum.	Healing of a dumb possessed man; renewed blasphemy of the Pharisees; dining with a Pharisee, Jesus rebukes hypocrisy; parable of the rich fool.	September, "	"	"	"
Capernaum.	Healing of a dumb possessed man; renewed blasphemy of the Pharisees; dining with a Pharisee, Jesus rebukes hypocrisy; parable of the rich fool.	October, "	"	"	"
Capernaum.	Healing of a dumb possessed man; renewed blasphemy of the Pharisees; dining with a Pharisee, Jesus rebukes hypocrisy; parable of the rich fool.	November, "	"	"	"
Capernaum.	Healing of a dumb possessed man; renewed blasphemy of the Pharisees; dining with a Pharisee, Jesus rebukes hypocrisy; parable of the rich fool.	December, "	"	"	"

LIST OF AUTHORS QUOTED.

- Abbott, Lyman, D.D.
 Adams, William, D.D.
 Adeney, W. F., D.D.
 Alexander, W. L., D.D.
 Alexander, Cecil Francis.
 Alford, Dean Henry, D.D.
 Anderson, Rufus, D.D.
 Andrews, S. J., D.D.
 Arnold, Dr. Thomas.
 Arnot, William, D.D.
 Atwood, Rev. E. S., D.D.
 Bacon, Sir Francis.
 Bailey, Philip G.
 Barclay, Rev. Dr.
 Barnes, Albert.
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 Binney, Rev. Thomas.
 Bosquieri.
 Braune.
 Briggs, Prof. C. A.
 Broadus, John A., D.D., LL.D.
 Brooks, Phillips, D.D.
 Brown, Dr. John.
 Browne, Bishop E. H., D.D.
 Bruce, A. B., D.D.
 Bunyan, John.
 Burnett.
 Burkitt, William, D.D.
 Bush, Prof. Geo.
 Bush, R. Wheeler.
 Bushnell, Horace, D.D.
 Butler, William A., D.D.
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 Carr, Prof. J.
 Cassell, P.
 Cecil.
 Champolion.
 Christleib, Theodor.
 Chrysostom.
 Clark, Prof. G. W.
 Clark, N. G., D.D.
 Clark, F. G., D.D.
 Clark, S.
 Clarke, James Freeman, D.D.
 Clericus.
 Congregationalist, The.
 Cook, Canon F. C.
 Cowles, Henry, D.D.
 Cox, Rev. S.
 Cumming, John, D.D.
 Dickens, Charles.
 Dixon, Wm. Hepworth.
 Doddridge, Philip, D.D.
 Dods, Marcus.
 De Pressensé.
 Edersheim, Alfred, D.D.
 Ellicott, Bishop C. J., D.D.
 Elliot, Canon C. J.
 Eschines.
 Eschylus.
 Espin, Rev. E. T.
 Ewald.
 Family Treasury.
 Farrar, Canon F. W.
 Fichté (System of Ethics).
 Flavel.
 Ford, T.
 Foster's Cyclopædia.
 Fuller, Thomas.
 Gardiner, Frederic.
 Geikie, Cunningham, D.D.
 Ginsbury, C. D., D.D.
 Glover, Richard.
 Godet, F., D.D.
 Goethe.
 Goodwin, E. P., D.D.
 Gray, J. Comper.
 Green, Prof. William.
 Greenleaf, Prof.
 Grotius.
 Gualther.
 Guizot, F. P. G.
 Guthrie, Thomas, D.D.
 Hackett, Horatio B., D.D.
 Hall, Bishop Joseph.
 Hall, Prof. Isaac H., D.D.
 Hamerton, Philip G.
 Hamilton, Dr. James.
 Hanna, William.
 Hare, Abp. Augustus.
 Hazzard, M. C.
 Havergal, Frances Ridley.
 Helmer, Rev. C. D., D.D.
 Hengstenberg.
 Henry, Matthew.
 Henry, Philip.
 Herodotus.
 Hervey, Bp. A. C.
 Heubner.
 Hilary.
 Holland, Rev. F. W.
 Hodge, A. A., D.D.
 Hood, E. Paxton, D.D.
 Horneck, A.
 Hudson, Prof.
 Hughes, Thomas.
 Ingelow, Jean.
 Irving, Edward, D.D.
 Jacobus, Prof. Malanchthon V.
 Jamieson, Fawcett, and Browne.
 Jerome.
 Johnson, Franklin, D.D.
 Josephus.
 Judson, Adoniram, D.D.
 Keil, Prof. C. F.
 Kelly, W.
 Kendrick, A. C., D.D.
 Kennedy, Dr.
 Ker, John, D.D.
 Kitto, John F., D.D.
 Krummacher, F. W., D.D.
 Kurtz, John H.
 La Bruyere.
 Land and Book.
 Lange, John P., D.D.
 Latimer, Faith.
 Leighton, Abp.
 Lepsius.
 Lias, Rev. J. J.
 Lightfoot, John B., D.D.
 Lowell, James Russell.
 Lovering, Prof.
 MacDonald, J. A.
 MacDonald, Geo.
 MacGregor, John.
 Mackintosh, C. H.
 MacLaren, Alexander, D.D.
 Maclear, G. F., D.D.
 McClintock and Strong.
 Meredith, R. R., D.D.
 Meyer, H. A. W., D.D.
 Milman, Dean Henry H., D.D.
 Milton, John.
 Missionary Herald.
 Monday Club.
 Monod, Adolph.
 Morison, James, D.D.
 Müller, Max.
 Murphy, J. G., D.D.
 Newhall, F. H.
 Newton, Rev. Richard, D.D.
 New York Observer.
 Olshauson, Hermann, D.D.
 Palestine Fund Report.
 Palmer, Ray, D.D.
 Pamela (in Golden Rule).
 Parker, Joseph, D.D.
 Payson, Edward, D.D.
 Peter.
 Phillips, Wendell.
 Plumptre, E. H., D.D.
 Pollock.
 Pope.
 Randall, Rev. D. A.
 Rawlinson, Prof. Geo.
 Riddle, Matthew, D.D.
 Roberts, J.
 Robertson, Rev. F. W., D.D.
 Robinson, Edward, LL.D.
 Robinson, Chas. S., D.D.
 Rochefoucauld.
 Rodgers, George.
 Rosenmüller, J. G., D.D.
 Rush, Dr.
 Ruskin, John, LL.D.
 Rutherford, Samuel.
 Ryle, J. C., D.D.
 Sanderson.
 Sandys.
 Schaff, Philip, D.D.
 Scott, Thomas.
 Scott, Sir Walter.
 Seelye, Prof. L. Clark.
 Simpson, Bp. Matthew.
 Smiley, Miss Sarah.
 Smith, William, LL.D.
 Smith, Thornley.
 Southgate, Rev. C. M.
 Spencer (Things New and Old).
 Spurgeon, Charles, D.D.
 Stanley, A. P., D.D.
 Steele, Daniel F., D.D.
 Stevenson, William F., D.D.
 Stier, Rudolph, D.D.
 Stock, Eugene.
 Strabo.
 Strong, Josiah, D.D.
 Sunday School Teacher.
 Sunday School Times.
 Talmage, T. De Witt, D.D.
 Tauler, John.
 Taylor, Wm. W., D.D.
 Taylor, Bp. Jeremy.
 Tennyson, Alfred.
 Terry, M. S., D.D.
 Thayer, J. H., D.D.
 Thompson, Rev. J. P., D.D.
 Thomson, William M., D.D.
 Todd, Rev. John E., D.D.
 Toplady, Aug. P.
 Trapp.
 Trench, Richard C., D.D.
 Tristram, H. B., D.D.
 Trumbull, Henry Clay, D.D.
 Tyng, Stephen, D.D.
 Ussher, Abp.
 Van De Velde.
 Van Lennep, H. J., D.D.
 Walker, J. B.
 Ward, W.
 Watson, A., D.D.
 Webster, Daniel.
 Wilson, Bp. Thomas.
 Woolsey, Theodore D., LL.D.
 Wordsworth.
 Whedon, D. D., LL.D.
 Whitney, Rev. Geo. H.
 Whittier, J. G.
 Young (Night Thoughts).
 Young, D.
 Zincke's Egypt.



FIRST QUARTER.

From January 1 to March 25, 1888.

Studies in the New Testament.

LESSON I.—JANUARY 1.

HEROD AND JOHN THE BAPTIST.—MATT. 14: 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*And his disciples came and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.*—MATT. 14: 12.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

I. ITS AUTHOR. Matthew the apostle. (1) *His names.* He is called *Levi* (Mark 2: 14) and *Matthew* (*true man*, or *the gift of God*). (2) *His parentage.* He was the son of Alphæus (Mark 2: 14), and was, without doubt, a Galilean Jew. (3) *His home* was at Capernaum. (4) *His business* was that of publican, or inferior tax-collector, under the Roman government. (5) He was called to be an apostle in the first year of our Lord's ministry (Matt. 9: 9).

II. ORIGINAL LANGUAGE. (1) The Gospel was without doubt written by Matthew in the Greek language. (2) It is probable that there was also a Hebrew Gospel by Matthew.

III. TIME OF WRITING. Probably between A.D. 50 and 65.

IV. PLACE OF WRITING. In Palestine, and probably at Jerusalem.

TIME OF THIS LESSON.—John was imprisoned in March or April, A.D. 28, after a ministry of about two years. He was beheaded a year later, in March or April, A.D. 29. The report of Jesus' doings reached Herod soon after.

PLACE.—Jesus was in Galilee with his twelve disciples. John was imprisoned and put to death at Macherus, a fortress and castle at the southern extremity of Perea, on the borders of Arabia, nine miles east of the northern end of the Dead Sea. The feast held by Herod, at which Herodias demanded the head of John the Baptist, was most probably held in this castle.

JESUS had been preaching more than two years. He was about thirty-two and a half years old.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—A fuller account than that here given is found in Mark 6: 14-29. A brief account in Luke 3: 19, 20; 9: 7-9.

PLACE IN THE WORLD'S HISTORY.—Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome (16th year); Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (fourth year); Herod Antipas, of Galilee and Perea (33d year). The Passover in this year, A.D. 29, occurred April 16; Pentecost, June 6; Tabernacles, Oct. 11.

Palestine had a population of about 6,000,000, the number of modern Jews in 1880, and about the same as the city of Rome, according to the census of A.D. 48. The Roman Empire, with its population of 120,000,000, held sway over nearly all the known world. It was a general time of peace, with slight wars only on the frontiers. Greece was subject to Rome politically, but relied still intellectually the school of literature and art.

PRONUNCIATIONS.—A'rētās or Arē'tās; Hēr'ōd; Hērō'diās; Pērē'ā; Sālō'mē; Tē'trārch (tē'trark).

INTRODUCTION.

For the next six months we continue to study the Gospel of Matthew, begun last year. But in the order of *time*, this lesson follows immediately after Lesson VI. of the Fourth Quarter, 1887, as given in chronological order by Mark and Luke.

Jesus had sent his twelve disciples throughout Galilee to preach the Gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 10; Mark 6: 7-14; Luke 9: 1-6). They proclaimed everywhere the wondrous works and heavenly words of Jesus, and wrought miracles in his name. Thus the fame of Jesus was spread abroad. The air was full of reports about him, and at last they penetrated through the din of a worldly court, even to the king on his throne in Tiberias, in Galilee, where he had one palace, or even in Macherus, beyond Jordan, where he had another.

1. At that time, ¹Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

2. And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

At that season Herod the tetrarch heard the report concerning Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore do these

¹ Mark 6: 14. Luke 9: 7.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Herod,—the Forebodings of a Guilty Conscience.—Vers. 1, 2. **1. At that time.** At this period of Jesus' ministry; somewhere in the little cycle of time present to the thoughts of the Evangelist. At exactly what point in that cycle this took place, we learn from Mark and Luke. (See *Introduction*.) **Herod the tetrarch.** Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, and tetrarch of Galilee, and of Perea beyond Jordan. His yearly revenue was 200 talents (\$328,500). A *tetrarch* meant originally "the ruler of a fourth part," but later it came to mean any *tributary prince*. Herod the Great divided his kingdom among three of his sons, one-half being assigned to Archelaus, and one-fourth each to Antipas and Philip II., so that they were strictly tetrarchs.

Herod Antipas had for his mother Malthace, a Samaritan. He married a daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia Petrea, just south of Perea; but becoming acquainted with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, in Rome, he sent his wife home, and married Herodias while her husband was still living. King Aretas avenged this insult by invading Herod's dominions, and defeating him with great loss. It was during the preparations for this war that John was beheaded. Herod remained in Palestine till A.D. 38, when he was banished to Lyons, in France, but eventually died in Spain.—*P.*

HIS CHARACTER. From the first, Herod was a light-minded, unreliable, prodigal, and luxurious prince; hence, also, he proved superstitious and cunning (Luke 13: 32; Mark 8: 15), and on certain occasions, either from folly or weakness, utterly heartless, cruel, and callous.—*Lange*. **Heard of the fame of Jesus.** The report about Jesus' marvellous works and teachings and claims. Till Herod's conscience troubled him for murdering John, he had taken no thought about Jesus. But how could Jesus have been so long active in one of Herod's provinces, followed by great multitudes, performing daily the most wonderful works, and his residence only a very few miles from Tiberias, where the king kept his court, and yet his fame never reach the royal ears? The most ready explanation would be, that during his ministry Herod had been absent from Galilee, either (1) on a visit at Rome, whither he went about this time (seeking the title of king); or (2) he had been engaged in hostilities with Aretas (the father of his former wife), making his headquarters at Castle Macherus, far away from the scenes of Jesus' labors.—*Andrews*. Moreover, he was too busy with his pleasures and honors to think a moment of a Jewish prophet, till his guilty conscience opened his ears.

2. And said unto his servants. Officers, courtiers. **This is John the Baptist,** whom just before this he had wickedly put to death, even his hardened conscience protesting against the crime. For he knew that he had slain a holy man, a man of courage and truth, a prophet of the Most High God, for speaking to him the truth of God. **He (he himself) is risen from the dead.** In chap. 16: 14, Luke 9: 7-9, this is given as one of the three opinions that were floating among the people as to our Lord's character, the other two being that he was Elijah, and that he was one of the old prophets who had risen again.

3. ¹ For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.

powers work in him. For ³ Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's

¹ Mark 6: 17. Luke 3: 19, 20.

— *Ellicott*. It is natural that Herod's guilty conscience should make him fear that the first of these rumors was the true one. — *P*. If we mistake not, that dis severed head was rarely thenceforth absent from Herod's haunted imagination from that day forward till he lay upon his dying bed. — *Farrar*. **And therefore.** Because he is risen from the dead, come from the home of spiritual beings of unknown power. **Mighty works** (*powers*) **do shew forth themselves in him.** The *powers* of the spiritual world, into which he had gone, and from which he has come. — *Morison*. He thinks John has brought back with him those larger powers, those diviner gifts, which the spirit receives when it enters upon the heavenly life, and the prophet may now exert those powers, together with his former terrible reproofs. No wonder Herod was afraid. — *P*.

THE GUILTY CONSCIENCE. (1) All persons have within their soul a conscience, which is the voice of God. (2) This conscience can give to the evil-doer the sharpest pain of which the soul is capable. (3) It may be silenced for a time, put to sleep by false doctrines, unheard amid the din of business and of pleasure, (4) but there comes a time when it awakes. A simple word, an unusual appearance, some foretaste of disaster, touches the soul as with a magic wand, and wakes it from its slumber. (5) "There is no evil that we cannot either face or flee from but the consciousness of duty disregarded. It is omnipresent, like the Deity. We cannot escape its power nor fly from its presence." — *Daniel Webster*.

- (6) "The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on Nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death."

— *Shakespeare* ("Measure for Measure").

"Conscience is a thousand swords." — *Richard III*.

(7) The only hope for a guilty conscience is in the redeeming love of Jesus, of whom John was the forerunner. Only his precious blood can cleanse the conscience and give the guilty peace. — *P*.

II. John the Baptist, — the Martyr Preacher. (1) He was the son of an aged priest, Zacharias, and Elizabeth, the cousin of Mary the mother of Jesus. Hence he was the second cousin of Jesus. (2) He was born probably in June, B.C. 5, in the hill country of Judea. He was six months older than Jesus. (3) He was a Nazarite, pledged to drink no wine or strong drink, and to let his hair and beard go untrimmed, as a sign of consecration to God (see Numb. 6). (4) His early life up to 30 years of age was passed in the solitudes of the wilderness of Judea, where he was prepared for his great mission as the forerunner of the Messiah. (5) He began to preach in the summer of A.D. 26, and preached for nearly two years. For almost a year his preaching was contemporary with the preaching of Jesus. Then he was shut up in the castle of Macherus by Herod Antipas, March, A.D. 28. (6) He was a courageous, faithful preacher of righteousness, living as he preached, fearing God, and therefore having no fear of man, a most earnest reformer, "bearding the lion in his den, the Herod on his throne."

III. The Right Doing which led to Martyrdom. — Vers. 3-5. 3. Herod had laid hold on (arrested) John. This was in March, A.D. 28, a year before the opening of



EASTERN PRISON.

4. For John said unto him,¹ It is not lawful for thee to have her.

5. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude,² because they counted him as a prophet.

wife. For John said unto him, 4 It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would 5 have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

¹ Lev. 18: 16 and 20: 21.

² Matt. 21: 26. Luke 20: 6.

our lesson (Matt. 4: 12). And put him in prison. At Macherus, in Perea, on the eastern side of the Dead Sea, near the southern frontier of the tetrarchy. Here Antipas had a palace and a prison under one roof, as was common in the East. It was the ordinary arrangement in feudal castles. Herod was now living in this fortress in order to prosecute the war with his offended father-in-law Aretas.—*Carr*. It was considered by the Jews as their strongest fortress, except Jerusalem. **For Herodias' sake.** (1) Because the crime of Herod was with and on account of Herodias, and (2) because Herodias wanted John put out of the way. She "had a quarrel against him" (Mark 6: 19).

THE CRIME of the guilty pair was one of manifold malignity and double-dyed turpitude. (1) Herod was married to the daughter of Aretas, an Arabian king, but abandoned her for the sake of Herodias.

(2) Herodias was the wife of her uncle Philip and older brother of Herod Antipas, but she deserted him, and eloped with the younger brother.

(3) Thus they both committed a threefold crime: they deserted their partners, committed adultery, and incest also. Both her husbands were her uncles, a relationship in which marriage was forbidden (Lev. 18: 12-14).

(4) Herod was guilty of the basest treachery to his brother. For it was while visiting his brother Philip in Rome that he became acquainted with Herodias, and as a guest he plotted against the honor and happiness of one who was both brother and host.

(5) Herodias, "an able, ambitious, unprincipled, but bewitching and ensnaring woman," seems to have entangled the too willing Herod in her snares for the sake of her ambitious desires. When she married Philip, she probably expected that, as the oldest son of Herod the Great, he would be heir of the whole kingdom; but now "her husband Philip was poor; his brother Antipas was rich. One dwelt in a private station, having been disinherited by his father; the other reigned in the Golden House (of Tiberias). She wished to be a queen; to stand at the head of a court. Hence her resolution was taken, that as Antipas was the most powerful prince of her race, she would become his queen and wife."—*Hepworth Dixon*.

(6) All these crimes were not the mere fruit of a sudden, unexpected storm of temptation; but were made possible by the bad characters and innumerable lesser wickednesses which prepared the way. The tree the storm blows over has almost always rottenness at the root, without which the storm would have raged in vain.—*P*.

THE REPROOF. 4. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her, for the reasons given above. He reproved Herod not once, but habitually, as the original hints.—*Schaff*. He reproved him for other sins as well as this crowning one (Luke 3: 19). At that time Herod was probably at his palace at Tiberias, not far from the scene of John's preaching.—*P*. It is uncertain whether John's reproof was a private and personal one, or was a public denunciation, before the people, of the crime of their prince.—*Abbott*. John reproved Herod not merely as a protest against an individual crime, but as a protest against a public crime, which was bringing ruin upon the nation.

(1) John could not effectively denounce the sins of the people if he let sins in high places go unreproved.

(2) Unrebuked crime in high places teaches, indorses, and propagates crime among the people. It tends to make it fashionable and safe. For how can a ruler punish in others the sins he publicly commits himself?

(3) Herod's crime was a public insult to the law of God, to the Jewish nation, to the moral sense of the people.

(4) It was bringing untold evils upon the people. Aretas, indignant at the affront Herod had put upon him, had declared war; and at the very time of John's reproof, preparations for war were actively going on. John sought to stop the flood of horrors the war would roll upon the people.—*P*.

5. And when he would have put him to death. He imprisoned John to stop his public reproofs of his crime. He knew that John was right and he was wrong, and therefore feared him the more. He must repent, or else he must shut the mouth of this reprover

6. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.

7. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

8. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.

But when Herod's birthday 6 came, the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst, and pleased Herod. Whereupon 7 he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she should ask. And she, being put for-8 ward by her mother, saith, Give me here in a charger the

of sin. He would not repent, therefore he must put an end to this man who continually fanned the flames of his conscience and vivified the stings of remorse. Imprisonment was not enough, even though it be in the rock dungeons of Macherus. The only certain way to stop the reproof was to destroy the reprover.

Josephus says that Herod's reason was the fear of political disturbances. But this does not differ from that given by the Evangelist, for John's reproofs were likely to lead to political difficulties. — *P.* He feared the multitude: lest his slaying of one they regarded as a prophet should arouse them to an uncontrollable passion of excitement against himself and his plans. Such enthusiasms were not uncommon among the Jews, and had led to the fall of more than one ruler. Clark says that he also feared John himself, as well he might. There is nothing so cowardly as a guilty conscience, or so to be feared by evil-doers as a holy man who voices the truth of God. — *P.*

IV. **The Birthday Festival.** — Ver. 6. The scene now changes to Macherus, the other palace of Herod, where John was imprisoned. The time is the latter part of March, just before the Passover, a year after the imprisonment.

6. **Herod's birthday.** Either his birthday, or the anniversary of his accession, his birth as a king, and hence also the anniversary of his father's death, — "a fit time for a Belshazzar-feast, a grand banquet to the military authorities and the chief men of Galilee (Mark 6: 21). It is evening, and the castle-palace is brilliantly lighted up. The noise of music and shouts of revelry fall into the deep dungeon where waits the prisoner of Christ." The daughter of Herodias, by her former husband. Her name was Salome, and she afterwards married her uncle, Herod Philip II., tetrarch of Ituria. Danced before them, or in the midst, as Rev. Ver. She had been sent by her mother to gain an opportunity for killing John (Mark 6: 21). The dance was a pantomime, probably of a voluptuous character, and was performed "in the midst," with the intoxicated party forming a circle about her. — *Schaff.* It was in the East, even more than with us, a disgrace for a woman to enter such a scene of carousing as characterized the king's feast (comp. Esther 1: 10-12). The dance was and still is sensual and exciting. — *Abbott.* And pleased Herod: the voluptuous Herod, and those with him; all, quite likely, more or less intoxicated, were pleased, doubtless, with the skill and grace of her performance, and with the condescension of a princess in thus honoring the birthday of the king. — *S. W. Clark.*

V. **The Rash Promise.** — Ver. 7. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask: unto the half of his kingdom (Mark). The word *promised* properly means *confessed*. There is a slight idea of *response* suggested by it. The monarch's liberality had been appealed to, though most probably in a tacit and indirect manner. "Salome was a princess, stooping to the art of an alme; but having done this indecent thing, she had gained a right to her reward; and by the custom of Oriental courts she could demand the wages of her shame." — *W. H. Dixon*, "The Holy Land," chap. 43, "Herodias." The tipsy monarch responded and consented. — *Morison.* A jewel, a bracelet, a palace, or a city, were probably in his thoughts as what she was likely to ask, and he would gladly give. — *Ellicott.*

A KINGDOM FOR A DANCE. Herod was willing to give away half of his kingdom for the sight of an immoral dance. Poor fool! But how many in our day give away the whole kingdom of their souls, with health and hope, prosperity, peace, and goodness, — yea, the whole kingdom of heaven, — for the paltry price of a glass of wine; the pleasure of the table; the gratification of passion, or pride; the acquisition of a little money. The race of Esau still thrives who sell their birthright for a mess of pottage. — *P.*

VI. **The Wicked Request.** — Vers. 8, 9. 8. And she, being before instructed of her mother: rather, "being put forward, or instigated, by her mother." The word does not imply that the girl had been instructed before she danced what to ask for, and St. Mark distinctly states (6: 24) that she went out from the banquet-hall to ask her mother what use she was to make of the tetrarch's promise. — *Handy Com.* The long-looked-for opportunity had at length come to Herodias when her bitter grudge against John the Baptist

9. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*.

10. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.

11. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought *it* to her mother.

head of John the Baptist. And 9 the king was grieved; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them which sat at meat with him, he commanded it to be given; and he sent, and be-10 headed John in the prison. And his head was brought in a 11 charger, and given to the dam- sel: and she brought it to her

could be gratified. She could now compel Herod to do what in his sober moments he dared not attempt.

WHAT SHALL I ASK? Here is an illustration of the mother's power to lead her child to good or evil. Every child in effect says to its mother, What shall I ask, — ask of God, of life, of the future; shall it be earthly good or heavenly good, sin or righteousness, heaven or hell? And the mother, consciously or not, is, by words, by example, by training, by spirit, answering this question, and putting forward her child to good or evil. — *P. Give me here.* In this place, on the spot, and hence without delay. The language implies haste. — *Clark.* Mark says she came in with haste, lest Herod should repent of his promise. It was customary for princes to require the *heads* of persons ordered for execution to be brought to them, (1) to gratify their resentment; (2) to ascertain the fact that the sentence had been executed. — *Barnes.* John Baptist's head in a charger, or large dish or platter. Here no doubt the "charger" was a royal dish of silver or gold. This was added as a hideous jest, implying an intention to devour it. — *J. A. Alexander.* Rather, it was an intimation that the sight of it would be a feast to her mother and herself. — *Morison.* Did she hope to kindle their merriment by the sense of the delightful wickedness involved in a young and beautiful girl asking that on one of the golden dishes which graced the board, should be given into her own hands the gory head of the prophet whose words had made a thousand bold hearts quail? — *Farrar.*

9. And the king was sorry. Mark says exceedingly sorry; not penitent, but worried and troubled. (1) Because he was outwitted, and forced to do what he had repeatedly refused. (2) The act was too horrible even for his conscience. He had an unknown dread of the holy man, especially as he had become acquainted with him during the year's imprisonment. (3) He was afraid that murdering John might create a rebellion, or at least arouse so strong an opposition on the part of the people as to cripple him in his war against Aretas. As a matter of fact, "he was soon afterwards defeated by Aretas with great slaughter, and never prospered after beheading John." His fears were well founded. Nevertheless for the oath's sake. It should be *oaths'*, not *oath's*, which is a printer's or editor's error. The word is plural in the original (see Rev. Ver.). — *Morison.* Herod had placed himself in a dilemma to make a choice of two evils, — to break a rash, wicked oath, or to commit murder. He should have chosen the former as the less of the two (comp. Lev. 5: 4-6). — *S. W. Clark.* And them which sat with him. The guests had heard the oaths, and it would make him seem a perjurer and fickle and mean if he disregarded his public promise. Pride and fear of public opinion turned the scale, for John would have few friends in that assembly. Probably if the oaths had been secret, he would not have hesitated to break them. The fact is, that the request did not come within the scope of the promise. Salome asked much more than half of Herod's kingdom. To all right-minded persons, it was far more than all his kingdom. He should have told her that he could give her half his kingdom, but he could not give up right and honor. — *P.*

VII. The Martyr's Fate. — Vers. 10-12. 10. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison, which was in another part of the castle. Mark says he sent an executioner, one of his body-guard, or soldiers, who must have been present in large numbers on account of the war with Aretas.

11. And his head was brought. Probably while the feast was still in progress and the young girl was still receiving the congratulations of those before whom she had danced. And she brought it to her mother, who was the most guilty one. The blood of her daughter's soul was on her; a stain that could never be washed out. She feasted her eyes on her dead enemy, thinking he was silenced at last; but, as Chrysostom well says, "The very contrary was the result; for John's cry was heard the more loudly thereafter. The more thou dost dissemble a sin, the more thou dost expose it. Sin is not hidden by the addition of sin, but by repentance and confession." "Is he silenced at last?" says Stock. "No, not yet; his blood has a voice in God's ear (Gen. 4: 10); how shall she silence that? and one day the voice of God's broken law will accuse her: how shall she silence that?"

12. And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

mother. And his disciples¹² came, and took up the corpse, and buried him; and they went and told Jesus.

12. And his disciples came. There had always been some in communication with him, for he had sent them before this to make inquiries of Jesus. There is a graphic touch in the original which "exhibits a picture of reverential deportment in relation to the mangled corpse." And went and told Jesus. To whom John had ever pointed them, as the Messiah of whom he was but the forerunner.

GO AND TELL JESUS. So should we go and tell Jesus all our troubles and works. (1) It will comfort us to have his sympathy. (2) It will make us feel more clearly that we are workers together with him. (3) It will keep us from those things we are unwilling to tell. (4) It will bring us into more intimate friendship and acquaintance with Jesus. (5) He will give us the guidance and light we need. — *P.*

OBSERVE (I.) the death of John the Baptist appears to have put an end to the doubts and jealousies which his disciples entertained concerning Jesus during the Baptist's life. — *Abbott.* So now a great sorrow often binds people together in sympathy and love and work.

OBSERVE (II.) that it was sorrow which drove them to Christ, to whom they came not while their own teacher was with them. When the deprivation of our earthly teachers brings us to the heavenly, it is gain, not loss. — *Abbott.*

VIII. **The Martyr's Success.** There is a lesson of marvellous impressiveness in the contrast between the success of Herod and that of John. Herod seemed to succeed, and John to fail; but in reality the exact opposite is the truth.

HEROD'S SUCCESS. He was a king. He had slain his enemy. He had applause and honor. But from this moment began for Herod Antipas a series of annoyances and misfortunes, which only culminated in his death years afterwards in disrowned royalty and unpitied exile. "Our pleasant vices," it has well been said, "are made the instruments to punish us."

(1) He was soon after this defeated in battle by Aretas, with great loss.

(2) Later on, Herodias stirred up her husband to go to Rome and obtain from the emperor the title of king. But being followed by complaints of the oppressed Galileans, the result was that he was deposed from his tetrarchy even.

(3) Then he was banished to Lyons, in France, and afterwards to Spain, Herodias accompanying him in his exile. They died in banishment.

(4) He was haunted by the terrors of a guilty conscience. The Roman poet Persius illustrates by Herod "the effect of superstitious fear in marring all the pleasures of pride and luxurious pomp." The memory of his crime doubtless haunted him as Banquo's ghost haunted Macbeth with its silent horror.

(5) Herod is pilloried in history. All ages see this crime like Cain's mark on his forehead.

(6) "A tradition or legend," says Ellicott, "relates that Salome's death was retributive in its outward form. She fell upon the ice, and in the fall her head was severed from the body." — *P.*

JOHN'S SUCCESS. (1) How different to the eye of sense the dealings of God with some of his servants, from his dealings with others. Those he gloriously delivers; these he appears to abandon to their foes; the three children are brought forth altogether unscathed from the fiery furnace; the Maccabean martyrs perish in the flames; Peter is delivered from the sword of Herod, from that sword which had just been stained with James' blood; one John the malice of an emperor fails to hurt, and he is plunged unharmed into the boiling oil; another falls a victim to a wicked woman's spite, and his life is given away at a wanton dancing-girl's request. But shall we therefore conclude that those God delivered, and these he did not deliver? Should we not rather say those were delivered openly, and in the face of the world — these as really delivered; however their deliverance did not as manifestly appear. — *Trench.*

(2) John finished the work that was given him to do. His life was a completed whole. Had he lived longer, he would have marred the perfection of this work. After the Messiah had come and was established, the work of the forerunner was ended.

(3) "The martyrdom of John is his strongest sermon, heard and felt everywhere. He still precedes Christ in every revival, as repentance must precede forgiveness." The martyrdom set this light on a hill for all the world to see. It rang the bell hidden in a tower so that all men must hear his message.

- (4) He really lives in the life of Christianity; he triumphs in its triumphs.
 (5) No man is a failure who retains his manhood and his character untarnished, whatever else he may lose.
 (6) In heaven he wears the victor's crown, and dwells forever in the joy of his Lord. — P.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Among the best *Commentaries* on Matthew for teachers are those by Abbott, Schaff (*Popular*), Cook (*Bible Com.*), Broadus (*American Com.*), Ellicott, Morison, G. W. Clark, Meyer, Lange, Rice, Jacobus, Barnes; *The Rev. Com.*; *The Cambridge Bible for Schools*; *The Handy Com.*; Stock's *Lessons on the Life of our Lord*; *The Life of Christ*, by Andrews (chronological order), by Edersheim, Geikie, Farrar, Hanna, Abbott. On the power of conscience, see Joseph Cook's *Monday Lectures* (Vol. IV.), "Conscience"; Shakespeare's *Richard III.* and *Macbeth*; Hudson's *Lectures on Shakespeare's Macbeth*; Scott's *Marmion*; Hood's *Poems*, "Dream of Eugene Aram"; Foster's *Cyclopedia of Illustrations* 1: 938; *Sermons* by Robertson, 4: 332; E. T. Fitch, and Francis Atterbury (*in Masterpieces of Pulpit Eloquence*), on "the death of John the Baptist"; Bonar's *Bible Thoughts*.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Vers. 1, 2. A guilty conscience gives perpetual unrest and fear. There is no escape from it except in the love of Jesus. No washing of hands like Pilate's, no tears like Esau's, "not all the perfumes of Arabia," can cleanse the guilty soul.

2. "My conscience had a thousand several tongues,
 And every tongue brings in a several tale,
 And every tale condemns me for a villain." — Shakespeare, "Richard III."

3. The terrors of a guilty conscience sweep away as so many cobwebs the belief that there is no future existence, no future punishment.

4. Ver. 3. The wicked and the just are in natural antagonism; between them is the irrepressible conflict of RIGHT with WRONG. — *Hurlbut*.

5. Men will either leave their sins, or will seek to silence those who trouble their conscience by reproof.

6. Ver. 4. The true minister will reprove the sins of the great and the powerful who are bringing injury upon the people.

7. Ver. 5. Men often do not dare to do all the evil they would like to. Anger would ruin or kill, if it dared.

8. Vers. 6, 7. Strong drink and passion lead to the most foolish actions and reckless expenditure.

9. Many a person gives away, not half his kingdom, but his whole kingdom, his life, his peace, his virtue, his soul, for a temporary pleasure.

10. Ver. 8. The mother often decides the fates of her children. They say to her, What shall we ask? And the mother's answer leads to heaven or hell.

11. Ver. 9. Note the difference between *sorrow* and *repentance*, and the worthlessness of sorrow that does not lead to repentance. — *Abbott*.

12. There is often among the young a false code of honor. They would rather do great wrong than appear to be mean or cowardly. They fear men more than they fear God.

13. Vers. 10-12. Temporary success is often the supremest failure.

14. A short life which fulfils its mission is a success.

"That life is long which answers life's great end." — *Young*.

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
 In feelings, not in figures on a dial. He most lives
 Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best." — *Bailey*.

15. Go and tell Jesus all your sorrows.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

SEE that the scholars have read, either at home or in the class, the parallel accounts in Mark and Luke.

CONNECT to-day's lesson with the last regular lesson in Matthew, and with Lessons V., VI., and VII., of the Fourth Quarter, 1887.

POINT OUT on the map the places referred to.

SUBJECT, — THE MARTYR'S WORK AND CROWN.

I. HEROD. THE GUILTY CONSCIENCE (vers. 1, 2). First, a VIVID PICTURE of the scenes in Galilee; Jesus and his wonderful words and miracles; the twelve going about among the cities and villages, repeating his words and doing miracles in his name; everybody talking about the wonderful prophet. Then Herod's fear that it was John come to life again, with more divine reproofs, and perhaps power to punish. This opinion the fruit of a guilty conscience.

Illustrations from Macbeth, Richard III., Hamlet's uncle, and others of Shakespeare's characters, are brought together in Joseph Cook's *Monday Lectures on Conscience*; Hood's poem, *The Dream of Eugene Aram*, Scott's *Marmion*, and Poe's *Raven*, contain striking illustrations of the power of a guilty conscience.

II. JOHN. THE FAITHFUL PROPHET DOING A HARD DUTY (vers. 3-5). Here is another opportunity for a WORD-PICTURE, which the scholars may help to form. The character of Herod was bad; his power to punish was almost unlimited. And yet John took his life in his hand and did his duty as a divinely sent prophet.

Illustration. Bishop Latimer once displeased Henry VIII. by a sermon he preached at court, and the king commanded him to recant the next Sunday. But when he rose to preach, he prepared his sermon thus: "Hugh Latimer, dost thou know to whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch who can take away thy life if thou offend. Therefore take heed how thou speak a word that may displease." But, as if recalling himself, "Hugh, Hugh, dost thou know from whence thou comest, upon what message thou art sent, and who is it that is present with thee? Even the great and mighty God, who is able to cast both body and soul into hell forever. Therefore be sure that thou deliver thy message faithfully." He then confirmed and urged with more earnestness the offending truths he had spoken the week before. But Henry was wiser than Herod, and embraced the preacher, thanking God for a man in his kingdom who dared to deal so faithfully with him. — *Foster, Cyc. of Illustrations*, 938.

A CONTRAST. John acted a very different part from that of the judges of Persia in the time of Cambyses. That madman of a monarch wished to marry his sister; and he demanded of the judges whether there were any Persian law that would sanction such a marriage. They pusillanimously answered that they could find no such law, but they found another, *That the monarch of Persia was at liberty to do whatsoever he pleased* (Herodotus 3: 31). — *Schaff*.

The dreadful influence of Herod's crimes compelled John to do what he could to prevent the evil, by removing, if possible, the crimes. These crimes were (1) involving the country in the disasters of war; and (2) were ruining the morals of the people by such an example in high places.

Illustration. In that great argument, says Wendell Phillips, which gave us the two most consummate orations of antiquity, the question was whether Athens should grant Demosthenes a crown. Demosthenes' speech is the masterpiece of all eloquence. Of the Accusation by Æschines it is praise enough to say that it stands second only to that.

"You know well that it is not music, nor the gymnasium, nor the schools that mould young men; it is much more the public proclamations, the public example. If you take one whose life has no high purpose, — one who mocks at morals, — and crown him in a theatrum, every boy who sees it is corrupted. . . . The character of a city is determined by the character of the men it crowns." — *Æschines*.

III. THE MARTYR'S CROWN (vers. 6-12). The story here again is a vivid picture full of instruction. The folly of giving half his kingdom in payment for a dance is illustrated by Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage; and Judas selling his Master for thirty pieces of silver.

Herodias shows a mother's influence for evil, which might have been for good.

The fruitlessness of seeking to avoid the consequences of sin by putting away those who would reprove the sin is illustrated by the after-career of Herod and Herodias.

The martyr crown of John can be seen by referring to Rev. 2: 7, 17; 3: 5, 12, 21; 7: 13-17.

LESSON II.—JANUARY 8.

THE MULTITUDE FED.—MATT. 14: 13-21.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life.*—JOHN 6: 35.

TIME.—April, A.D. 29. Not long after the last lesson, and just before the Passover at Jerusalem, which took place that year April 16.—*Lewin.*

PLACE.—The plain of Butaiha, belonging to Bethsaida (Luke 9: 10), a “desert,” *i.e.*, uncultivated, uninhabited place a short distance southeast of Bethsaida, on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee. Bethsaida was a double town situated on either side of the Jordan at its entrance into the sea. “The plain of Butaiha forms a triangle, of which the eastern mountains make one side, and the river-bank and lake-shore the other two. It was at the southeastern angle of this plain where the hills come down close to the shore, that Thompson places the site of the feeding of the five thousand.”—*Andrews.* See *Land and Book* (New Ed.), 11: 393.

RULERS.—Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome (16th year); Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (third year); Herod Antipas of Galilee and Perea (33d year); Herod Philip of Trachonitis, etc. (33d year).

JESUS.—Aged between 32 and 33 years; just beginning the last year of his ministry.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Mark 6: 32-45; Luke 9: 10-17; John 6: 1-14.

INTRODUCTION.

The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle mentioned by all four evangelists, and the first occurrence fully narrated by them all. It also furnishes a definite chronological point for a harmony of the Gospels. Soon after the death of John the Baptist, the twelve disciples return from their tour of Galilee (Mark 6: 30), meeting Jesus, probably, at Capernaum. Very likely their return at this time may have been determined by the death of John, which must have become very generally known; and as they were preaching in the dominions of Herod, they may have anticipated danger to themselves, from the tetrarch who had beheaded John. Our lesson begins just after the return of the disciples (Mark 6: 30).

13. ¹When Jesus heard *of it*, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

Now when Jesus heard *it*, ¹³ he withdrew from thence in a boat, to a desert place apart: and when the multitudes heard *thereof*, they followed him on

¹ Matt. 10: 23; 12: 15. Mark 6: 32. Luke 9: 10. John 6: 1.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Jesus leaves Herod's Dominions for Safety and Rest.—Ver. 13. 13. When Jesus heard of it: the death of John the Baptist, through John's disciples, who, according to the previous verse, went to Galilee and told Jesus. **He departed thence:** from Galilee, and probably Capernaum, where Jesus made his home, so far as he had one.

REASONS FOR LEAVING GALILEE. Two reasons are given. **FIRST.** The death of John. (1) Galilee was within the dominions of Herod, and he, fearing that Jesus might be the Baptist restored to life (vers. 1, 2), might seek to imprison or murder him and his disciples, who no more favored Herod's crimes than did John. (2) Jesus may have wished “to avoid being the centre of the popular excitement which the death of John was likely to cause, and which we know, as a matter of fact (Jos. Ant. xviii. 5, § 2), was so strong that men looked on all the subsequent troubles of Antipas and his wife as a retributive judgment for it.”—*Ellicott.* There was danger of a political revolt or rebellion; and this was entirely contrary to Jesus' principles and practice. The desire shown, when he fed the five thousand, to make him a king, may have been one expression of this tendency to revolution. (3) Perhaps, also, as Andrew suggests, “he himself desired a few hours for solitary communion with God, for the refreshment of his own spirit, agitated by the death of John, whom he mourned as a faithful friend, and in whose untimely and violent end he saw the sign and foreshadowing of his own approaching death.”

14. And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and ¹was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

foot from the cities. came forth, and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, and healed

¹ Matt. 9: 36. Mark 6: 34.

SECOND. From Mark 6: 30, 31, we learn the additional reason, that the disciples had just returned from their missionary tour in Galilee, and needed rest; which could not be easily obtained at this time amid the crowds. So many came that they had not time even to eat. They needed this retirement (1) for physical rest; (2) for instruction in review of their labors; (3) for communion with God; (4) for that wider and truer view of their work which comes from seeing it as a whole, as a landscape is seen from a mountain top.—*P.* By ship, or boat, one of the Galilee fishing-vessels, which Peter or John seems to have converted from a fishing-boat to a "Morning Star," to carry Jesus on his missionary tour. Into a desert place apart:

an uninhabited district near Bethsaida (Luke 9: 10). See *Place*, above. It was beyond the dominions of Herod Antipas, and in the principality of Herod Philip.

II. He finds Multitudes awaiting him in the Desert Place.

—Vs. 13, 14; Mark 6: 33. 13. And when the people had heard thereof. That he had gone to this retired place in Bethsaida.

They followed him on foot out of the cities. Such as Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida. They ran round by the head of the lake, taking one of the fords of the river, so as to meet Jesus, who was crossing with the twelve by ship. They probably could watch the boat in which Jesus was, and thus see where he was going. Mark says they arrived at the place before Jesus did, though others may have kept coming later. "The whole distance which the people had to travel even from Capernaum was not more than six or eight miles, and, from the conformation of the coast, could be as rapidly passed by those on the shore as those in the boat."

THE ATTRACTION. They were attracted (1) by curiosity; (2) by his teachings which accompanied his miracles; (3) by a desire to be with the great prophet, and perhaps aid or at least have part in the coming of his kingdom; (4) some, doubtless, had special needs or were friends of the sick; (5) it was just before the Passover (John 6: 4), and multitudes thronging the road to Jerusalem would turn aside to see and hear the now famous prophet.—*P.* 14. And Jesus went forth. From the boat, when they reached the land.

III. He has Compassion, and heals and teaches.—Ver. 14. Mark 6: 34; Luke 9: 11. A great multitude. There were 5000 men, besides women and children. And was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick. His compassions failed not; and never fail. Wearied as he was, and though longing intensely for seclusion, he could not tear himself from the needy people. And "his mercy," as Trapp expresses it, was not mere "mouth-mercy."—*Morison*. From Mark and Luke we learn that he taught them many things about the kingdom of God, for he found them "as sheep not having a shepherd." The scribes and Pharisees were no true shepherds; they devoured the flock, but did not feed it; they were blind to the truth, and could not teach it; they were going to destruction, and could not guide others to heaven.—*P*



FISHING BOAT ON THE SEA OF GALILEE

15. ¹And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

16. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

17. And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

their sick. And when even ¹⁵ was come, the disciples came to him, saying, The place is desert, and the time is already past; send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food. But Jesus said ¹⁶ unto them, They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, ¹⁷ We have here but five loaves,

¹ Mark 6: 35. Luke 9: 12. John 6: 5.

NOTE THAT TEACHING AND HEALING WENT TOGETHER. Jesus cared for the bodies as well as the souls of the multitudes. Jesus knows our temporal wants as well as our spiritual. But now, as then, he ever leads us through earthly to spiritual blessings. The lower are the means to the higher. All workers for Jesus must follow this example. Christianity is a river of blessings flowing through the world, blessings to the bodies and minds, as well as the souls, of men. And blessing the body is a proof of its power to bless the soul, and of the sincerity of our efforts. — *P.*

IV. **He retires to a Mountain with his Disciples.** — John 6: 3, 5. He would give his disciples the retirement and the teaching which they needed. They could report more fully what they had done on their evangelizing tour from which they had just returned; could talk over their plans, their successes, their mistakes, and receive the instruction they would soon need as to the true way of preaching the Gospel to the world, and as to the Gospel they should preach.

But the multitudes followed even to this retirement, and very likely a large portion of the day was spent in teaching and healing. — *P.*

V. **The Weary and Hungry Multitudes.** — Vers. 15-18; Mark 6: 35-38; Luke 9: 12-14; John 6: 5-9. **15. And when it was evening.** "The Hebrews," says Dr. Robinson, "reckoned two evenings, viz., the first from the ninth hour, or about three o'clock, until sunset; the other from sunset onward." It must have been toward the latter part of the "first" evening, or toward six o'clock, for Mark says that the day was far spent. Ver. 23 refers to the "second" evening, which began at about six o'clock. **His disciples came to him.** They had been among the multitude and had seen their destitute condition; but the people were so excited about the prophet, and so interested in his teachings, that they had not noted how rapidly the time had flown. **The time is now past.** The time of the evening meal, or most of the time of the day; the time when they could easily get home.

16. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. There is an emphasis on the *ye*, the Saviour thus leading his disciples to realize their own utter inability, in order that they might by and by realize more intensely the fulness of his ability. — *Morison.* Brethren, the day is wearing away; this is a desert place; there are hungry, perishing multitudes around us, and Christ is saying to us all, "Give ye them to eat." Say not, "We cannot; we have nothing to give." Go to your duty, every man, and trust yourselves to him; for he will give you all supply just as fast as you need it. — *Horace Bushnell.*

We learn from John that probably at this point Jesus (John 6: 5-7) asked Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? It is possible that Philip may have brought the report of the disciples about the multitude, he being doubtless acquainted with many of the people, for his home was at Bethsaida, not far away. Philip replies that 200 pennyworth (about \$30) of bread would not be sufficient to feed the multitude, even if they could buy so much in that desert place. Besides, they probably did not have so much money in their treasury.

Jesus then asks, How many loaves have ye?

17. And they say unto him. After making inquiries, they report through Simon Peter. **We have,** by purchase from a young boy (John 6: 9), **five loaves.** The *loaves* here were of barley-meal made into small, thin cakes, baked hard on the side of the oven, so as to be broken. **And two fishes:** and these small ones. — *John.* The Greek *opsarion* (used in John) is a diminutive; it properly means what was eaten along with the bread, and specially refers to the small and generally dried or pickled fish eaten with bread, like our "sardines," or the "caviar" of Russia, the pickled herrings of Holland and Germany.

18. He said, Bring them hither to me.

19. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, ¹he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

and two fishes. And he said, ¹⁸ Bring them hither to me. And ¹⁹ he commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples

¹ Matt. 15: 36.

Millions were caught in the lake. We know that both the salting and pickling of them was a special industry among its fishermen. — *Edersheim*.

No wonder that the disciples asked, What are these among so many (*John*)? And still we ask the same question, as we stand in the presence of the evils to be overcome, the work to be done, the multitudes to be converted to Christ, the power of the enemy. If, indeed, "these" were all, if there were no Holy Spirit, no omnipotent Christ working in and through them, then our efforts would be but "to dam the Nile with bulrushes," or irrigate Sahara with a garden hose. — *P.*

HOW MANY LOAVES HAVE YE (*Mark*)? Here are two great principles. (1) The principle of continuity, that what is to be must come from what has been, an enlargement, a development of old things. The harvest grows from the seed; the spiritual life has a basis of physical life; the new character is God's evolution upon the old nature; the new truths grow from the old. (2) The principle of economy. Nothing goes to waste; the rain that waters the ground forms the brook; the leaves that fall go into the soil. The good that has been is not wasted, but makes a part of the larger future good. The thoughts of many lesser thinkers make the greater thinker possible. — *Phillips Brooks*.

VI. The Multitudes fed with Miraculous Food. — Vers. 19-21. 19. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass. *To recline*, according to the customary posture of eating. The grass would be luxuriant at this time of the year. At the southern base of the rocky, rising ground which our Saviour sought as a temporary retreat, there is just such a spot as was needed to constitute the multitude's dining-ground. — *Morison*.

THE ARRANGEMENT. Mark tell us that they were arranged in ranks, by hundreds and fifties, and thus their number was easily known. But the arrangement was chiefly for convenience in distributing the food, and so that it could be known that every one was served. The men and women probably sat apart, as was customary. They were symmetrically arranged in parallelograms, but of course with the fourth side free. They were ranked, that is to say, in a succession of *triclinia*. The arrangement by hundreds and fifties does not mean, as Fritzsche and Meyer suppose, *in companies which were in some cases a hundred in number, and in some cases fifty*. It represents such a symmetrical arrangement of the whole suite of parties, that viewed in one direction, *in rank*, from end to end of the respective *triclinia*, there was a succession of semicircular hundreds, in tier beyond tier; whereas, when viewed laterally, or *in file*, there was a succession of fifties; viewed from front to back, there were fifty hundreds; viewed from side to side, there were a hundred fifties. Each hundred constituted a distinct *party*, or *triclinium*, and would be separated by a convenient interval from all the other hundreds. — *Morison*. Mark tells us they sat *in ranks*, literally, *garden plats*. With their bright-colored, Oriental dresses, these men, sitting cross-legged on the ground in groups, presented an appearance which recalled a brilliant garden in the early summer. The picture thus presented by Mark is lost in our English translation. — *Abbott*. And looking up to heaven. In prayer we should use such outward gestures as may most fitly serve to express the inward disposition and holy affections of our heart and soul. — *Petter*. He blessed. The Greek word means "praised, celebrated with praise." The meaning differs but little from the word used by John, "he gave thanks." — *Thayer's Grk.-Eng. Lexicon*. The act was natural and simple enough, the "saying grace" of the head of a Jewish household as he gathered his family around him. The formulae in such cases were commonly short and simple, like our own,

LOAVES & FISHES.



20. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

21. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

to the multitudes. And they 20 did all eat, and were filled: and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And they that did eat were 21 about five thousand men, beside women and children.

such, *e.g.*, as, "May God, the ever-blessed one, bless what he has given us." — *Ellicott*. It was held by the Jews, that "he who partakes of anything without giving thanks acts as if he were stealing it from God." The prayer of thanks was always pronounced by the father of the family; and Jesus never neglects it. — *Killo*. And brake. The Jewish loaves, be it remembered, were of the form of thin cakes or crackers. Gave the loaves to his disciples. A beautiful illustration and foreshadowing of their future work of bearing the bread of life to perishing sinners. — *G. W. Clark*. Mark adds that he divided the two fishes also among them all. And the disciples to the multitude. The disciples had the privilege, as all disciples still have, of being the almoners of Jesus, distributing his good gifts to their fellow-men.

20. And they did all eat, and were filled. No one went away hungry. So ever with God's Gospel: there is enough for all and to spare. No one need imagine that others will have to go without because he receives all he needs. And they took up: by Christ's command (John 6: 12). THE DESIGN of this command. (1) The design is to bring out the preciousness of the food which Jesus had given. — *Schaff*. (2) He likewise exhorts his disciples to frugality; for the increase of the bounty of God ought not to be an excitement to luxury. — *Calvin*. God loveth a bountiful, not a wasteful, hand. — *Sandys*. (3) It completes the proof of the miracle, for more remained than there was to begin with. (4) It showed to the disciples the spiritual truth that the more they gave of the Gospel blessings to others, the more they would have themselves. — *P*. Of the fragments that remained. It is usual to understand by "pieces" the fragments broken by the multitude during their meal; but it is more probable that they were pieces broken by our Lord, — pieces that remained undisturbed or unconsumed because of the abundance of the supply. — *Schaff*. Twelve baskets full. All four accounts have the same word for basket, *cophinus*, *i.e.*, the wallet which every Jew carried when on a journey, to keep himself independent of Gentile food, which would be unclean. Each of the twelve gathered into his own wallet, and filled it full. St. Mark tells us that fragments of fish were gathered also. — *Cambridge Bible*. John says, the fragments of the five barley-loaves, to assert the identity of these fragments with their origin. The twelve baskets were an apt symbol of that love which exhausts not itself by loving, but after all its outgoings upon others, abides itself far richer than it would have done but for these, of the multiplying which there ever is in a true dispensing. — *Trench*.



21. About five thousand men, beside women and children. As the crowd had come, in many cases, from considerable distances, the women and children were probably few in number, were grouped together by themselves, and were not counted. — *Ellicott*.

VII. Jesus the Bread of Life. — John 6: 25-35. The next day, when Jesus and his disciples had recrossed the lake, as described in the next lesson, Jesus makes an explanation of the truths taught by this miracle, showing that he himself was the true bread from heaven, and was to their souls what this miracle of the loaves was to their bodies. — *P*. This miracle is a symbol of the inexhaustible love of Christ himself; a symbol of that miraculous multiplying of sacred influences which, from one brief life of three active years, and one body pierced and broken on the tree, feeds innumerable thousands; a love which Christ imparts to his disciples, and which they in turn convey throughout the ages and to all lands. — *Abbott*.

(1) By his death and atonement Jesus brings spiritual life to men. He awakens the spiritual faculties and senses that were dead to the higher, *immortal* interests. A new sphere or region is opened to men, as if one who had been born blind had the sense of sight given to him.

(2) He gives through the Holy Spirit, whom he sends to be ever with us, imparting life and activity to the moral and spiritual nature.

(3) He nourishes every faculty of the soul, enlarging and strengthening them all, and thus the soul grows in perception, in power, in activity.

(4) He especially is food to the character, making it to grow more and more like his own.

(5) The soul has many hungers, appetites, and desires for more and higher things. That soul is dead which does not hunger. The best and highest and happiest earthly condition is that which is full of desires and aspirations and longings, called hunger in the Beatitudes. Now Jesus can give satisfaction to every form of the soul's hunger. For instance, (a) The soul hungers for love. Jesus brings a perfect, deep, divine love to us, and presents to us the most lovable object on which we can set our inexhaustible affections. (b) The soul hungers for forgiveness, and Jesus on the cross brings forgiveness and the assurance of forgiveness from God. (c) The soul hungers for immortal life, and Jesus gives it to us. (d) The soul hungers for God, (e) for heaven, (f) for holiness, a perfect living, (g) for larger spheres and broader life, (h) for usefulness, (i) for knowledge, (j) for happiness. And every one of these, and every other conceivable hunger of the soul, Jesus satisfies. His salvation is as many sided as the nature of man. —P.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On Bethsaida and the place of this miracle, see Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, 3: 301; Thomson's *Land and the Book* (new ed., Vol. II. p. 393); Smith-Peloubet *Bible Dictionary*; Andrew's *Life of Christ*, 211-217; Macgregor's *Rob Roy on the Jordan*, 327. Works on *The Miracles*, by Trench, MacDonald, Steynmeyer; *Sermons on the New Life*, by Horace Bushnell, p. 364; Spurgeon's *Sermons*, series 9: 54; *Sacred Discourses*, G. H. Belfrage, on "The Bread of Life"; *Sermons* by W. Jay, on "The Bread of Life"; *Christ our King*, by W. H. Pinnock, "Sustenance of the Kingdom"; *Sermons* by Mark Hopkins, "That Nothing be lost"; by H. W. Beecher, "Fragments of Instruction"; by Phillips Brooks, Vol. I., "The Food of Man"; Vol. II., "How Many Loaves have ye?"

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Ver. 13. All workers for Jesus need seasons of rest, retirement, meditation, and communion with Jesus. No one can do the best work without these seasons.

2. Nothing can please God more than our importunity in seeking him. When he withdraws himself, it is that he may be more earnestly inquired for. — *Bishop Hall*.

3. Ver. 14. Jesus has infinite compassion toward men. He loves to help and to serve them.

4. Jesus knows and sympathizes with our temporal needs. There is no earthly care or burden but we should bring to him.

5. These people gathered in crowds around Jesus from various motives, but he taught them and helped them. We should preach the Gospel to every one, no matter with what motives they come to hear.

6. Vers. 15-17. Our duties and our privileges are not measured by what we can do of ourselves, but by what God is willing to do through us. We cannot turn the machinery of the factory, but we can let the water on to the wheel. We cannot push the steamship across the ocean, but we can let on the steam for the engine to do it.

7. Vers. 19, 20. We, like Christ, should ever give thanks and ask God's blessing before our meals.

8. When we give freely of what God gives us, when we as individuals and churches distribute to others the blessings God bestows, we shall find that more is left than we received at first. This is true of money, what it will do for us; of truth, as in teaching; spiritual life, as in leading others to Jesus; of comfort and the support of the promises, when we comfort others.

9. We can make a little go a great ways with his blessing. We need not be troubled by our small talents, or meagre means, or few opportunities, if we consecrate them to him and his service.

10. The hope of the world's salvation is in the wonderful power of God in multiplying the lilies; the numbers, the wealth, the power of Christians are enough for the salvation of the world, if they will distribute what God gives them, and his blessing goes with it.

11. Gather up the fragments. Let nothing be wasted or lost in God's work. Using well or wasting the fragments of time, of opportunity, the nooks and corners of life, makes all the difference between success and failure.

12. With Christ, our very leavings are more than all we had without him.
 13. The food of the soul is that which gives it spiritual life, which enlarges its being, strengthens its faculties, develops its moral character, satisfies its longings and aspirations.
 14. Jesus is the bread of life.
 15. The blessedness of the bread of life: (1) it satisfies the hunger of the soul; (2) it continues, like the manna, all our journey through; (3) it is abundant; (4) it strengthens and builds up the character; (5) it gives safety; (6) it brings eternal life here; (7) it gives eternal life beyond the grave.
 16. The way to obtain this blessedness, — coming to Jesus, believing on Jesus, eating the bread of life, receiving it into the heart and life.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

NOTE THE PARALLEL ACCOUNTS, and not only see that the scholars have read them all, but let them have the different Gospels open before them.

POINT OUT THE PLACES ON THE MAP, and note that they are under different governments.

SUBJECT, — JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE.

I. THE MULTITUDES SEEKING CHRIST (ver. 13).

THE REASONS why Jesus left Capernaum, and the value of them.

THE BENEFITS and necessity of times of rest and personal instruction.

Illustrations. (1) The spring needs continual filling, if there is to be outflow. (2) The tool gains in power by its times of sharpening. (3) The buds that swell and bloom in spring pass through the rest of the silent processes of winter.

II. THE COMPASSION OF JESUS FOR THEM (ver. 14). Jesus is love. He showed his love in two ways, (1) healing, (2) teaching.

BODILY HEALING aids the spiritual teaching. It is by doing good in ways that the dullest can see are sincere and self-denying that we can prove our sincerity in giving spiritual aid, and open the doors for its reception.

Illustration. There has been a strong, almost irresistible prejudice against Christianity in China, because of the wrongs she has received by war, and the opium trade, from nations called Christian. "During the few years previous to 1878," says Mr. Stevenson, "twelve million persons perished in China from famine. But to relieve this terrible distress, thousands of dollars were collected from Christian nations, especially England, and distributed among the starving with such self-sacrifice that five missionaries fell victims to their over-exertions." "But," says Mr. Forest, the British consul, "this distribution of Christian charity through the missionaries will do actually more to promote the opening up of China than a dozen wars, and in fact the door has been flung open wider than ever for the Gospel." — *Christlieb*, "Foreign Missions," pp. 205-209.

Illustration. It was said of a certain statesman, that "he had so much interest for men in masses that he had none for them as individuals." But Jesus cares for each individual. He calls each by name. He gives to each precisely what that one needs.

III. HE FEEDS THEM WITH MIRACULOUS FOOD (vers. 15-21). But our daily supply is really as wonderful, and as worthy of our gratitude.

Illustration. There is an Eastern fable of a boy having challenged his teacher to prove to him the existence of God by working a miracle. The teacher, who was a priest, got a large vessel filled with earth, wherein he deposited a kernel in the boy's presence, and bade him pay attention. In the place where the kernel was put a green shoot suddenly appeared, the shoot became a stem, the stem put forth leaves and branches, which soon spread over the whole apartment. It then budded with blossoms, which, dropping off, left golden fruits in their place, and in the short space of one hour there stood a noble tree in the place of the little seed. The youth, overcome with amazement, exclaimed, "Now I know that there is a God, for I have seen his power!" The priest smiled at him, and said, "Simple child, do you only now believe? Does not what you have just beheld take place year after year, only by a slower process? But is it the less marvellous on that account?" — *Krummacher*.

The disciples, after they had fed the multitude, had more left than to begin with.

Illustrations of this giving are seen in teaching, in giving comfort, in all Christian work.

Illustration. As the widow's oil increased, not in the vessel, but by pouring out; as here the barley bread multiplied, not in the whole loaf, but by *breaking* and *distributing*; and as the grain bringeth increase, not when it lieth on a heap in the garner, but when scattered upon the land, so spiritual graces are best improved, not by keeping them together, but by distributing them abroad. — *Sanderson*.

Applications. (a) Churches thrive in their spiritual life when they most distribute to others the Gospel God has given to them. A church once being in debt, voted to turn all its contributions into that channel till the debt was paid. But the contributions grew smaller, and the debt did not. Afterwards, they gave to all objects of benevolence, and they prospered themselves financially. (b) A missionary church doing most and giving most for the heathen is most prosperous at home in all spiritual usefulness. (c) Individuals will find the same rule holding true. They gain spiritual life by imparting it. They gain clearer views of truth by teaching others. They grow richer in all that is best in life by giving freely of the money God gives them.

The disciples helpless in themselves, but mighty through Jesus.

Illustration. Two men representing an important institution were once in great straits for their cause, when one said to the other, "I am o, you are o, but Christ is i, and that makes 100. With Christ behind us, we must succeed."

IV. JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE.

Illustration. The philosophic Hamerton tells us the story of a woman who worked in a cotton factory in one of the great manufacturing towns in Lancashire, and who, in an excursion, went for the first time to the coast. When she caught the earliest glimpse of the Irish Sea, the expanse laying out before her eyes looking like the limitlessness of the ocean in its rush and roll of billows, she exclaimed, as she drew one boundless breath of freshness and glory, "At last, here comes something there is enough of!" Those who come to the boundless abundance of the Gospel, who look out on the wide, fathomless sea of infinite love, may say, with a thousand-fold more emphasis and delight, "*At last, here comes something there is enough of!*"

"Enough for each, enough for all,
Enough forevermore!" — *Dr. Robinson.*

LESSON III. — JANUARY 15.

JESUS WALKING ON THE SEA. — MATT. 14: 22-36.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.* — MATT. 14: 27.

TIME. — During the first half of April, A.D. 29. The evening and night following the feeding of the 5000, in our last lesson.

PLACE. — *Sea of Galilee.* The disciples crossing over toward Capernaum from the plain of Butaiha on eastern shore southeast of Bethsaida, where the 5000 had just been fed. Also *the land of Gennesareth*, on the western shore, a fertile district four miles long, which contained Capernaum and other villages and towns.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Mark 6: 45-56; John 6: 15-21.

JESUS. — Between 32 and 33 years old, and in the third year of his ministry.

INTRODUCTION.

When the multitudes had satisfied their hunger, as described in the last lesson, and began to perceive what a marvellous miracle Jesus had wrought, how he had healed their sick, and taught them with words of divine power about the kingdom of God, they were sure that he must be the expected Messiah, the king of the Jews. (John 6: 14, 15.) "Who so fit to be their king as he who could banish want and labor from their borders, and revive the good old times when their fathers were fed by bread from heaven?" — *Kitto.* Who so worthy to be their leader and to redeem them from the power of their enemies, and be a victorious king of a triumphant nation, as he who could feed armies by his word, and heal the wounded with a touch, and had in himself divine wisdom and power? Therefore, they attempted to make him a king by force. They would place him at the head of the Jewish kingdom, and march in triumph toward Jerusalem, arousing the whole country as they went, to make him a temporal king, outshining Solomon in glory in their royal city of Jerusalem. But this was entirely contrary to Jesus' mission and his true spiritual kingdom which he came to found. It would be seeming triumph, but real defeat. Jesus, therefore, took the course described in the beginning of the lesson.

22. And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

23. ¹And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and ²when the evening was come, he was there alone.

24. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

And straightway he con-²²strained the disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side, till he should send the multitudes away. And after he had sent ²³the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray: and when even was come, he was there alone. But ²⁴the boat was now in the midst of the sea, distressed by the waves; for the wind was con-

¹ Mark 6: 46. ² John 6: 16.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Jesus, dismissing the Multitudes, spends the Night Alone in Prayer.

—Vers. 22, 23. **22. And straightway.** Immediately after the multitude had finished their repast, and were planning to make Jesus king. It was getting late, and high time for the people to return home. **Jesus constrained his disciples.** Not by outward compulsion, but by urgency of command.—*Meyer.* The reason why Jesus dismissed his disciples was probably their sympathy with the enthusiasm of the people.—*Lange.* They seem extremely reluctant to go, for they had to be constrained, compelled against their will, for (1) this thwarted their hopes of seeing Jesus made king. (2) They would not like to go away alone at night. (3) They did not like to leave their teacher alone, as if they were forsaking him. **To get into a ship.** Better, as in Rev. Ver., to enter the boat, the one they had come in, not very large, for it could be propelled by oars. **And to go before him unto the other side.** Mark: “to Bethsaida”; John: “toward Capernaum,” this being the ultimate point to be reached. We infer that he sent them to Bethsaida, which was not far off (Luke 9: 10), at the mouth of the Jordan, directing them to await him there, so that they would cross together to Capernaum on the opposite shore, which they actually did, after the miracle. This accords best with all the details as given by the three evangelists.—*Schaff, in Rev. Com.* Bethsaida would be a safe and quiet harbor where they could wait among friends till Jesus came to them from his hour of prayer and proceeded with them home to Capernaum.—*P.* **23. When he had sent the multitudes away.** He gave them his final words, and dismissed them to their homes, or those who were on their way to Jerusalem to attend the Passover to a place where they could spend the night, and then proceed on their journey. **He went up into a mountain.** More literally, *into the mountain*, the mountain, or rising ground, at the base of which he had fed the multitudes. He went up *into* the recesses of this rising ground. The northeastern shores of the Sea of Tiberias, as compared with the northwestern, abound in solitudes and secret places suitable for secret prayer, being comparatively barren.—*Morison.* **Apart** (or, privately, or by himself) **to pray:** to open up, and let out, in the presence of his Father, all the longings of his heart. In that unreserved unbosoming of himself all the depths of his being would be laid open to the full and filling influx of the mind and heart and will of his Father.—*Morison.* **And when the evening was come.** The second or late evening, beginning with sunset. The darkness had now descended upon the whole scene. **He was there alone.** This season of prayer alone with God lasted several hours, for it began in the evening after sunset; and he does not come to his disciples till the fourth watch, or between three and six o'clock the next morning (ver. 25).

REASONS FOR THESE LONG HOURS OF PRAYER ALONE. (1) He needed rest after the long days of labor in teaching and working. (2) In all spiritual work there is need of constant communion with God. The best part of prayer is this communion. If Jesus needed this, how much more do we. (3) As Dr. Broadus says: “He specially needed consolation and strength; for his labors seemed only to collect unspiritual and fanatical crowds, out of all sympathy with the true design of the Messianic mission.” (4) The action of the people to make him a king was a renewal of one of his greatest temptations, — to obtain a worldly kingdom, and greatness and honor, with ease and plenty and immediate success, instead of a spiritual kingdom and the salvation of men by the hard and slow way of self-denial and the cross.—*P.* “And as he prayed, the faithful stars in the heavens shone out.”

II. The Disciples in a Storm; Contrary Winds.—Ver. 24. But the ship. The fishing-vessel containing the disciples. Was now in the midst of the sea. Which

was here only about five miles across. When Jesus came to them they had gone 25 or 30 furlongs (John 6:19), "which would be not quite three miles, the Greek *stadium* (furlong) being considerably less than our furlong."—*Dr. Broadus*. Tossed with waves. The expression in the original is forcible, "tortured by the waves," writhing in throes of agony, as it were. These sudden storms are very characteristic of the Lake of Gennesaret.—*Prof. Carr*. To understand the causes of these sudden and violent tempests, we must remember that the Sea of Galilee lies 600 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The snowy peaks of Lebanon are directly to the north. The heated tropical air of the valley is a constant invitation to the cold and heavy winds from the north, which sweep down with great fury, and in sudden storms, through the ravines of the hills which converge to the head of the lake, and act like gigantic funnels.—*Abbott*. "My experience," says *Dr. W. M. Thomson*, "in this region enables me to sympathize with the disciples in their long night's contest with the wind." For the wind was contrary. From the north or northeast. From any point on the eastern shore, the disciples would require to steer northward in order to reach Bethsaida. But a contrary wind, blowing strongly from the northeast, drove them back far into the sea; so that the real direction in which they went was westerly, toward Capernaum.



REASONS FOR THIS EXPERIENCE. He will not have them to be clinging only to the sense of his bodily presence,—as ivy, needing always an outward support,—but as hardy forest trees which can brave a blast; and this time he puts them forth into the danger alone, even as some loving mother-bird thrusts her fledglings from the nest, that they may find their own wings, and learn to use them. And by the issue he will awaken in them a confidence in his ever-ready help.—*Trench*.

THE EYE OF THE LORD UPON THEM. Mark (6:48) tells us that Jesus saw them toiling in rowing. To themselves they seemed alone, but his eye was upon them from his moun-

25. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26. And when the disciples saw him¹ walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

And in the fourth watch of the night he came unto them, walking upon the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is an apparition; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be

¹ Job. 9: 8.

tain-top. His heart was with them. They were continually within his love and protection. — P.

"I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air,
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care." — *Whittier*.

Alone or in company, in sickness or in health, by sea or by land, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, the same eye which saw the disciples tossed on the lake is ever looking at us. We are never beyond the reach of his care. Our way is never hid from him. He knows the path that we take, and is still able to help. He may not come to our aid at the time we like best, but he will never allow us utterly to fail. — *Ryle*.

III. **Jesus comes to their Aid.** — Vers. 25-27. 25. And in the fourth watch of the night. Between 3 and 6 o'clock in the morning. When the Jews came under the power of the Romans, they frequently adopted the Roman method of computation, according to which the night was divided into *four watches*, each consisting of three hours. — *Morison*. The first, from twilight to 9 o'clock; the second, from 9 to 12; the third, from 12 to 3; the fourth from 3 to daybreak (at this time of the year about 6 o'clock). — *Jacobus*. Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. In the extremity of their danger, exhaustion, and despondency, Jesus came to his disciples, by his supernatural power over nature. He was and is Lord of every element and force of nature, and could control and wield them at his will.

26. They were troubled, saying, It is a spirit. Rather an apparition, a ghost, a spectre, and hence to them a sign of disaster or death. He would appear to them at first like a dark moving speck upon the waters; then as a human figure; but in the dark, tempestuous sky, and not dreaming that it could be their Lord, they take it for a spectre. — *J., F. and B.* They cried out for fear. We are quite as likely to shrink from approaching blessings as from threatened curses, as we view them. Because neither curse nor blessing always comes in a shape to be understood by us. — *H. C. Trumbull*. The near approach of the supernatural in any way is apt to alarm, reminding us of helplessness and sinfulness; as Peter, after the miraculous draught of fishes, said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5: 8). — *Prof. Broadus*.

27. Be of good cheer; it is I (Greek, *I am*); be not afraid. Bishop Hall says, "Let heaven be but as one scroll, and let it be written all over with titles, they cannot express more than 'It is I.'" "The foundation of all consolation," says Gauthier, "is a real knowledge of Christ, and the believing conviction that he is near us." Here I should prefer to give it this meaning: Christ says not merely, "It is I, your Friend and Master"; he says, at least implies, it is the "I AM" who is coming to you; the Almighty One, who rules wind and waves, who made them, and whom they obey. — *Abbott*. "Be of good cheer," became the watchword of their lives. — *Ellicott*.

APPLICATIONS. I. *The disciples in this storm were a type of the church of Christ in a restless and sinful world*, tossed by tempests of persecutions and opposition, assailed by storms of false doctrines and heresies, of science falsely so called, of worldliness and temptation. But the eye of the Saviour rests upon it. He comes and says, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." He conquers the storm, and bids the sea be still. "A vessel in the sea is safe so long as the sea is not in the vessel. The church is safe in the world so long as the world is not in the church." The church with the divine Saviour, the Christ, in it, is always safe. Christ in the doctrine, in the life, in the love of the church, is an everlasting safeguard; and the tempests come to make us feel our need of him, and cling more closely to him.

II. *We see here also a type of the individual Christian*, amid the storms of sorrow and temptation, doubts and perplexities and cares. (1) Ours is a ship on a voyage, not a ship

28. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31. And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters. And he said, Come. And Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters, to come to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou

in a harbor, so that the storms blow over us; but it is a ship in progress, battling with the winds and the waves. It is not the absence of danger, but the presence of Christ, which reassures us. Our confidence is simply this: that Christ is in the ship, and that when he is pleased to rebuke the tempest, the wind and the sea will obey him. — *MacDonald*. (2) The one thing we need more than all others is the cheering presence of Christ with us. More Christ in our lives; more Christ in our plans; more Christ in our love, our motives, everywhere, is what we need. (3) Our disasters and happy fortunes, our tempests and our calms, our perils and deliverances, come to set us thinking of him whom, in the quiet everyday course of our life, we are too apt to forget. They come to teach us that he is always with us, ordering all things according to the good pleasure of his will, and to constrain us to trust in him instead of in ourselves, by making us feel how utterly we are in his hands. — *S. Cox*.

III. *Here also is a type of the soul in the tempest of sin and its consequences.* Sin always raises a storm, as it did in Jonah's case. All the diseases, oppressions, cruelties, gnawings of conscience, lives without hope and hearts without rest, are a part of the tempest raised by sin. But the greatest fury of the storm is in the future. In this world we see but the little cloud compared with the tornado and hurricane yet to come. There is no human escape from this storm. We may "toil in rowing" all we will, but can not reach the desired haven. But Jesus comes to us with words of cheer. He can say, Peace, be still! He calls to us, It is I; be not afraid. And whosoever hears the call and receives Jesus will find that his word calms the storm, and gives perfect peace. — *P*.

IV. *Peter's Experience in the Storm.* — Vers. 28-33. 28. And Peter answered him. In reply to his words, It is I; be not afraid (ver. 27). Lord, if it be thou, rather, *since* it is thou; not expressing a doubt, or at most but the lingering echo of doubts driven away by Christ's assuring words. Bid me come unto thee on the water: or waters. Not "let me," but "give me the word of command," — "command," or "order me to come unto thee upon the waters." — *J., F. and B.* This is in striking harmony with Peter's character. He was ardent, impulsive, sanguine, and confident. There seems to have been some ambition and vainglory in Peter. Not only would he out-do the other disciples, but, like Jesus, he would walk on the water. — *S. W. Clark*.

29. And he said, Come. Make a trial of your faith. Jesus knew that by permitting him to make the trial, Peter would learn some very important lessons he needed much. He walked on the water. Not necessarily very far; and yet so long as he thus walked, it was through supernatural aid from Christ. The power was obtained and conditioned by faith in Christ's power. So in our spiritual walk above the waves of this world. — *Schaff*, in "Popular Com."

30. But when he saw the wind boisterous, — *i.e.*, the high waves, impelled by the wind, rushing against him. As long as Peter looked to Jesus only, he rose by faith over the elements of nature; but as soon as he looked away from Jesus to the boisterous waves, he began to doubt, to despond, and to sink. — *P. Schaff*, in "Lange." He cried, saying, Lord, save me. Here was an example of genuine prayer, short, earnest, to the point, prompted by a sense of need, looking to Jesus, answered. How earnestly every sinner should offer this prayer.

31. And immediately: mark the *immediately*. Jesus did not delay. Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him. It was not Peter's laying hold of Christ, it was Christ's laying hold of him, that bore him up. In our extremity it is not our hold of Jesus, but his of us, on which our trust resteth. Our hand is weak, but his is strong; ours so readily

32. And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

33. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth¹ thou art the Son of God.

doubt? And when they were³² gone up into the boat, the wind ceased. And they that³³ were in the boat worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

¹ Ps. 2: 7. Matt. 16: 16; 26: 63. Mark 1: 1. Luke 4: 41. John 1: 49.

relaxes, — too often lets go its hold; but his, none can pluck out of it, and none that are in it can perish. — *Λαμμα*. **O thou of little faith.** These five words are the translation of one in the original (ὀλιγόπιστος). Trapp renders it *petty-fidian*, or *small-faith*. — *Morison*. Jesus, who mingled tenderness with rebuke, recognized the reality and sincerity of his faith, while he reproved him for its feebleness; for “little faith” is a different thing from faithlessness. — *J. P. Thompson*. **Wherefore didst thou doubt?** Literally, *unto what? to what end? for what purpose?* Surely the doubting was uncalled for and unreasonable. — *Morison*. *Note the timeliness* of this rebuke. Jesus did not rebuke Peter while he was sinking, but after he had taken him by the hand, and reassured and saved him. — *P*. Christ does not find fault with him for *coming*, but for *doubting*. It was not that he trusted the master too much, but too little. So the Saviour complains never of our confidence, but only of our *diffidence*. — *Jacobus*.

THREE LESSONS FROM PETER'S EXPERIENCE. I. The incident itself is generally regarded as an illustration of Peter's great faith. To me the lesson appears quite different. Zealous but impetuous and self-confident, a certain rash willingness to go into danger, a certain thoughtless scorn of it, a certain subtle and yet unconscious vanity in the exhibition of his own faith and courage, led Peter now to wish to show his faith by walking on the wave. But he only showed his fear. Christ walked on the wave for a purpose: to come to his disciples whom otherwise he could not reach; and he fell not. Peter walked on the wave for no other purpose than the pleasure of doing a great deed, and demonstrating, perhaps to himself even more than to others, that he dared attempt it; and he would have sunk but for his Saviour's presence. It was a useless miracle for which Peter asked; the result was an exhibition, not of his strength, but of his weakness. And the lesson appears to me to be: True faith never attempts wonders for the sake of doing them. It relies on God for everything in time of need, but *never seeks or manufactures occasions for marvellous experiences or exhibitions of faith*. — *Abbott*.

II. In the plight of Peter, as in a sacred drama, we see graphically represented the spiritual experience of many of Christ's disciples when they are “in deep waters.” As long as they look steadfastly to Jesus, their heart is strong and their footsteps are firm. But the moment that they look away, and occupy themselves with their difficulties, as viewed apart from their Strength, they tremble and begin to sink. Their sinking recalls to their mind the presence of the very present One; and hence the piercing cry, *Lord, save me!* The Lord hearkens and hears and delivers. — *Morison*.

III. When Peter got out of the boat and found himself standing on the water, he began to think much of himself for being able to do so, and fancy himself better and greater than his companions, and an especial favorite of God above them. Now, there is nothing that kills faith sooner than pride. The moment that Peter grew proud, and began to think about himself instead of about his Master, he began to lose faith, and then he grew afraid, and then he began to sink, and that brought him to his senses. Then he forgot himself and remembered his Master, and then the hand of the Lord caught him. — *MacDonald*.

32. And when they (Jesus, with Peter) were come into the ship (boat), the wind ceased. John adds that they willingly received him after seeing his dealing with Peter, and immediately they reached the land.

33. They that were in the ship. Perhaps the crew, but more likely the disciples themselves who had remained on board while Peter tried to walk on the water. The disciples were fishermen, and would have probably managed their own boat. Mark says they were sore amazed, and wondered, “for they considered not the miracle of the loaves; for their heart was hardened.” But this language is not severer than some words of condemnation uttered by Christ directly to the twelve, *e.g.*, Matt. 16: 8, 9. — *Abbott*. For the most part these mountain squalls died away gradually, and left the waves rough. Here the wind ceased in a moment, and ceased as their Lord entered the boat. Had they understood all the divine creative energy which the miracle of the loaves involved, nothing afterwards, not even the walking on the waves, or the lulling of the storm, would have seemed startling to

34. ¹And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.

35. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;

36. And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and ²as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

And when they had crossed ³⁴ over, they came to the land, unto Gennesaret. And when ³⁵ the men of that place knew him, they sent into all that region round about, and brought unto him all that were sick; and they besought him that ³⁶ they might only touch the border of his garment: and as many as touched were made whole.

¹ Mark 6:53.

² Matt. 9:20.

Mark 3:10. Luke 6:19. Acts 19:12.

them. — *Ellicott*. Of a truth thou art the Son of God. This new display of power had convinced them. It was not so marvellous as the miracle of the loaves, but was more striking in form.

V. **Healing and Help for Many.** — Vers. 34-36. 34. And when they were gone over (which John says was immediately (John 6:21)), they came into the land of Gennesaret. A small district four miles long and two or three wide, on the west side of the Sea of Galilee, to which it gave one of its names. Capernaum was situated in this district. Josephus describes it as the garden of the whole land, and possessing a fertility and loveliness almost unparalleled. — *Alexander*.

35. Had knowledge of him. Recognized Jesus, knew who he was, and that he had arrived upon their shores. They sent out into all that country. Encouraged by the marvellous miracles he had just performed. Some had been fed in the Bethsaida desert, others had heard the story of the disciples upon the sea. Brought unto him all that were diseased. Some had not heard, and needed to be notified; others were unable to come of themselves; others needed the impulse of an invitation, and the encouragement of those who believed. There are the same kinds of spiritually needy ones now, and it is the duty of all who know Jesus to send out into all the country around and bring them to Jesus.

36. Only touch the hem of his garment. A woman had been thus healed in the presence of a crowd (chap. 9:20-22), so that these people were not superstitious, but had strong faith. As our Lord was only passing through, a greater number could be healed in this way. — *Schaff*. The ordinary outer Jewish garment was a square or oblong piece of cloth (worn something like an Indian blanket, or with a hole in the centre for the neck), with tassels at each corner, and a fringe along the two edges. A conspicuous deep-blue thread was required to be in the tassels (Num. 15:38-40; Deut. 22:12). Hence the border the woman touched was not at his feet, but below the waist. Godet and others think that what was touched was one of the four tassels at the corners. "One of the four tassels," says Brown, "hung over the shoulder at the back, and this was the one touched."

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Trench, MacDonald, and others on the *Miracles*; Bonar's *Bible Thoughts and Themes*, 11:67, 146; a translation of Anatolius' Greek poem on Christ in the tempest, in Schaff's *Christ in Song*, and two poems in Foster's *Cyc. Poet. Ill.*, 11:3449, 3450, 4038-4045; the tract, *It is I, be not afraid*; Spurgeon's *Sermons*, 9:476; Joseph Cook's *Monday Lectures, on Conscience*, "The Physical Tangibility of the Moral Law"; *Sermons* by F. W. Maurice, "Lord of the Winds and Seas"; on the form of Oriental ships, see Van Lennep's *Bible Lands*, pp. 59-65.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Ver. 23. Note how much time Jesus spent in prayer and communion with God. The greater our activities, the more the need of being alone long and often with our Father in heaven.

2. Ver. 24. To every church, to every person, there come storms and contrary winds. Trials, persecutions, difficulties, assaults on faith, temptations, opposition, must be expected.

3. All these things are necessary to the trial and improvement of God's people, to the cultivation of faith, of manliness, of courage, of character, of power, of holiness.

4. But Jesus always watches over us, and is ready to save from too great trials, even when he himself is unseen.

5. We must do our part, toiling in rowing, and never giving up our exertions.

6. Ver. 25. Jesus always comes to those who are toiling in obedience to him.

7. Ver. 26. Jesus knows the best time and best way of coming to our relief.

8. Why does infinite love delay? May it not be for this wise and gracious purpose, that in the obscure night of our afflictions, the failure of every earthly help and comfort, and the disappointment we thence experience, may serve as the dark foil to commend his goodness and faithfulness, and to show us more of his glory? — *T. Ford.*

9. Even the appearances and approaches of deliverance are sometimes occasions of trouble and perplexity.

10. Jesus is Lord of nature, has power and control over all its forces, and can use them for the safety and defence of his people.

11. Ver. 27. There is always good cheer, hope, and encouragement where Jesus is consciously present.

12. Vers. 28-31. Self-confidence, self-righteousness, and pride almost invariably lead into trouble and humiliation.

13. So long as we look beyond the stormy waves to Jesus, we can walk triumphant over them.

14. Unbelief is weakness; faith is strength.

15. Ver. 33. The miracles of Christ are proofs of his divine nature.

16. Vers. 35, 36. It is the duty and privilege of all who have found Christ to bring others to him.

17. Jesus is the good Physician, to cure all the maladies brought by sin.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

SEE THAT the scholars have the *Parallel Accounts* before them.

POINT OUT the places on the map, and trace the course of the disciples' boat. This makes the lesson more real.

THE CONNECTION with the last lesson is very close, only the statement in John coming between, that the people would make Jesus a king. This throws some light on the first verses of the lesson.

The lesson to-day is a parable in action. It teaches us as did the scenes in the house of the Interpreter, in *Pilgrim's Progress*.

SUBJECT, — THE POWER OF JESUS TO HELP AND HEAL.

I. JESUS ALONE IN PRAYER (vers. 22, 23). From this touching fact several impressive lessons can be taught, — the need of prayer and communion with God, the need being greater the more pressed we are with work; there are times when we should continue long in prayer, the time in this case being incidentally noted by a comparison of vers. 23 and 25; Jesus watched as well as prayed, as we learn from Mark 6 : 48.

Illustration. What Bosquieri says of the ancient pilot at sea beautifully represents the alliance of earnest prayer and active means. "His eye is on the star that directs him, but his hand is on the tiller all the time." — *Cabinet of Illustrations.*

II. THE DISCIPLES IN A STORM (ver. 24). A *picture* and a *symbol*. Trace out the course on the map. Storms on the Sea of Galilee. The long hours the disciples toiled in rowing. How this experience would teach them self-reliance, faith in God, manliness, patience, hope.

APPLICATIONS to the storms of life, which assail the church and the individual; to the sinner exposed to the dangers of sin.

III. THE DELIVERANCE (vers. 25-27, 32, 33). All this time of danger, the eye of Christ, the Lord of the sea, was upon his disciples.

Illustration. A minister of my acquaintance was once rambling in the famous labyrinth of Henry VIII., where the common children's puzzle is wrought out by paths between high and thick evergreen hedges. The time for closing drew near, but he was unable to find his way out. At last he happened to look up, and saw a man in the high tower in the centre of the labyrinth watching him all the time, and waiting to catch his attention. The eye above could see all the ways so hidden from the man within, and soon guided him out of his difficulties. — *P.*

Jesus came to the disciples on the stormy sea in a way that showed his power over the sea. The Lord's prayer well ends (unfortunately left out in the Rev. Ver.) with the thought of our Father's power over all things, so that he is able to answer prayer. The Lord of the sea was present, and nothing could hurt his children.

Illustration. During one of the wars which raged on the continent of Europe several centuries ago, a division of an invading army occupied a small village for some time. The commanding officer made his headquarters at the house of a pious family. When the divi-

sion left the village, the general was so pleased with the treatment which he had received, that he ordered a plate with the inscription, "This house is under the protection of General —," to be placed over the door. Perilous days followed. The village was occupied again and again, and while all the other houses suffered more or less from the chances of war, the hand of violence was never lifted against that house. It stood peacefully and in safety during the war, — a fit emblem of the man who is shielded by God amid the conflicts of life. — *Congregationalist*.

Illustration. OIL ON THE STORMY SEA. It is becoming a frequent practice to pour oil on the waves to save ships in a storm. "Occasionally," said a sea-captain, "when we have been in the midst of very heavy seas, I have helped matters very much by tying a bag on each side of the ship, and letting the oil drop from them, drop by drop. The effect was instantaneous and magical; the great waves came on as fierce as ever, but the oil tended to make them pass under the ship instead of hammering the sides. Many of our English harbors are constructed with pipes across the entrance, filled with oil, which may be tapped in bad weather, when a ship is trying to gain refuge." Of course Jesus used no such means, but they are a hint to us of how easy it would be for almighty power to calm the sea. We, made in the image of God, have faint echoes or shadows of the infinite power.

NOTE THE BLESSING and good cheer of having an almighty, ever-present Saviour.

IV. PETER'S EXPERIENCE (vers. 28-31). This is an individual application of the lessons taught by the coming of Jesus to all the disciples.

WE LEARN LESSONS against presumption; against all seeking to outdo others, even in good things, to show our superiority; against running into temptation and danger. But lessons of faith, of Jesus ready to help even the imperfect, of looking beyond the dangers to Jesus himself. Looking at ourselves, at our weakness, our unworthiness, we sink in despair; but looking to Jesus, we find assurance, and hope, and cheer.

Illustration. There was once a good woman who was well known among her circle for her simple faith and her great calmness in the midst of many trials. Another woman, living at a distance, hearing of her, said, "I must go and see that woman, and learn the secret of her strong, happy life." She went, and accosting the woman, said, "Are you the woman with the great faith?" "No," replied she, "I am not the woman with the great faith, but I am the woman with the little faith in the great God." — *Dr. Robinson's Sunday Evening*.

V. JESUS HEALS AND HELPS MANY (vers. 34-36). Jesus is the good physician, always able and willing to cure men. Like these Gennesaret men, we should bring all we can to Jesus to be healed.

LESSON IV. — JANUARY 22.

JESUS AND THE AFFLICTED. — MATT. 15: 21-31.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.* — JAMES 5: 13.

TIME. — Early summer, A.D. 29. A few weeks after the last lesson.

PLACE. — The first miracle was performed on the borders of the country of Tyre and Sidon, forty or fifty miles northwest of the Sea of Galilee; the others, in the region of Decapolis, on the southeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (fourth year); Herod Antipas, of Galilee (33d year); Herod Philip, of Iturea, including Cesarea Philippi.

INTERVENING HISTORY. — Discourse on the bread of life, suggested by the feeding of the 5000 (John 6: 22-71); and later on teachings about unwashed hands and the traditions of the elders. Matt. 15: 1-20; Mark 7: 1-23.

PARALLEL ACCOUNT. — Mark 7: 24-37.

PRONUNCIATIONS. — Bēthsā'îdā; Cā'nāanite (Kā'nānite); Dēcāp'ōlīs; Itūrē'ā; Sī'dōn; Sy'rō-Phēn'ician; Tŷre.

INTRODUCTION.

We learned at the beginning of Lesson II. that after the martyrdom of John the Baptist, Jesus sought retirement and rest for his disciples. But both Lesson II. and Lesson III. show us how his purpose was for a time defeated by the crowds who followed them. But to-day we see how he gained the desired retirement.

On the return of Jesus to Capernaum after the feeding of the 5000 and the miraculous calming of the sea, Jesus healed many of the sick, and discoursed on the bread of life to the people, both on the same day and on the following Sabbath (John 6: 22, 59), teaching doctrines very distasteful to the Pharisees. After the Passover (April 16-24) the Jerusalem scribes and Pharisees, perhaps aroused by the reports of those who were fed with the 5000 on their way to Jerusalem, sent a deputation to Jesus (Matt. 15: 1) asking questions, which he answered in such a faithful, pointed way as gave great offence (Matt. 15: 12). Jesus then withdrew from Galilee, Herod's dominions, and sought retirement (Mark 7: 24) in the mountainous region bordering on Phœnicia, to the northwest of Galilee. Here occurred the first incident of to-day's lesson. Then going northward through the territory of Sidon (Mark 7: 31, Rev. Ver.) "he descended, probably through one of the passes of the Hermon range, into the country of the Tetrarch Philip. Thence he continued 'through the midst of the borders of Decapolis,' till he once more reached the eastern or south-eastern shore of the Lake of Galilee" (Mark 7: 31), where he wrought the miracles recorded in the latter part of the lesson. Thus Jesus avoided the enmity of the Jews, and the antagonism of Herod (all these places being outside of his dominions) allowed the excitement of the people to cool, and found opportunity for rest, retirement, and the instruction of his disciples in private.

21. ¹Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have

And Jesus went out thence, ²¹ and withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanitish woman came out from those borders, and cried, saying, Have mercy

¹ Mark 7: 24.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Jesus seeks Retirement beyond the Land of Israel and of Herod.—Ver. 21. Then Jesus went thence: from Galilee, and probably Capernaum (John 6: 59). And departed: rather *withdrew*, as Rev. Ver., implying that the reasons for going lay in the place from which he went, rather than in the place to which he was going. **Into the coasts:** the parts, district, or environs, not the seashore on which the cities were situated. It was the narrow strip of country in which Tyre and Sidon were the seaports and capitals, and the mountainous part of the country which bordered on Galilee. The journey was not long, as Tyre is only about 35 miles, and Sidon 55 miles from the Sea of Galilee. **Tyre and Sidon.** Tyre and Sidon were Phœnician seaports, and great commercial emporiums. They are only about twenty miles apart from one another, Tyre being the more southerly of the two. At the time of our Saviour's sojourn they were still in a comparatively flourishing condition.—*Morison.* Tyre was 19 miles in circumference, and was noted for its great wealth and Tyrian purple dye. Sidon had glass manufactories, and was distinguished for its schools of literature. At present they are both in a miserably degraded condition; mere villages. The population of Tyre is from 3000 to 4000; and that of Sidon is about 5000.—*Morison.*

REASONS FOR JESUS' RETIREMENT. (1) To be beyond the domain of Herod, who thought him to be John the Baptist restored to life (Matt. 14: 2). (2) To avoid the machinations of the Pharisees, who sought to destroy him before his work was done (Matt. 15: 12). (3) To prevent any uprising of the people to make him join in rebellion and become the temporal Messiah of their hopes (John 6: 14, 15). (4) To give opportunity for the rest and private instruction of his disciples, which he had sought before in the desert of Bethsaida (Mark 6: 31; 7: 24). (5) He would teach them the lesson so hard for them to learn, which Peter, some years after, was taught by the vision of the sheet let down from heaven (Acts 10: 9-18), and all the apostles finally learned by the Holy Spirit descending on Gentiles as well as on Jews, that he came to save the Gentiles also; that his Gospel began with the Jews, but was broad enough to include all nations.—*P.*

II. A Syro-Phœnician Mother pleading for her Daughter.—Ver. 22. Jesus, having come to the borders of Tyre and Sidon, lodges with his disciples in a house, where he wishes his coming to remain unknown (Mark 7: 24). Edersheim thinks that very possibly it was the house of some Jewish disciple. **A woman of Canaan.** Mark describes her more particularly. She was a *Greek* or *Gentile*, i.e., in language and religious education, and a *Syro-Phœnician* by race. The term Canaan was the older title of the country, and

mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is griev-

the inhabitants were successively termed Canaanites and Phœnicians, as the inhabitants of England were successively called Britons and Englishmen. Matthew used the older term, Mark the later. — *Abbott*. **Came out of the same coasts:** or borders. She came from a part or village of the same country on whose borders Jesus was. **And cried unto him:** falling at his feet (Mark 7: 25). She, living near Galilee, had heard of his marvellous works, and who many of the people thought him to be, and this had given her hope of finding help from him. Luke (6: 17) says that people from Tyre and Sidon had come to hear Jesus, and to be healed. **Have mercy on me:** for her daughter's trouble was her own. Perhaps the daughter inherited an evil tendency to her malady, and the cure would thus relieve the conscience-smitten mother as well as the daughter. **O Lord, thou son of David.** She so addresses Jesus, because, from living in the neighborhood of the Jews, she was familiar with their Messianic expectations, and with the Messiah's title, as well as with the Messianic reputation of Jesus. — *Meyer*. **My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil:** or demon. Literally, *very evil deviled*, and so rendered in one of the old versions. — *Abbott*. Mark calls it "an unclean spirit," because it produces uncleanness of body and soul.

THE DISEASE. We can obtain some idea of the grievous torment of this young girl from the description given of similar cases of demoniac possession. One such a boy is described as lunatic, often falling into the fire and often into the water (Matt. 17: 15, 18). The spirit makes him dumb, "and whenever he taketh him, he teareth him, and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away" (Mark 9: 17, 18).

DEMONIACAL POSSESSION. The demoniac was one whose being was strangely interpenetrated by one or more of those fallen spirits, who are constantly asserted in Scripture (under the name of demons, evil spirits, unclean spirits, their chief being the Devil, or Satan) to be the enemies and tempters of the souls of men. He stood in a totally different position from the abandoned wicked man, who morally is given over to the Devil. This latter would be a subject for punishment, but the demoniac for deepest compassion. There appears to have been in him a double will and double consciousness. It has been not improbably supposed that some of these demoniacs may have arrived at their dreadful state through various progressive degrees of guilt and sensual abandonment. Lavish sin, and especially indulgence in sensual lusts, superinducing a weakness in the nervous system, which is the especial bond between body and soul, may have laid open these unhappy ones to the fearful incursions of the powers of darkness. — *Alford*. (1) Jesus speaks of these cases as if they were real possessions by demons, and not merely cases of insanity. (2) Demoniacal possession is almost always connected with other bodily disease. It is not probable that demons can gain such possession of a healthy body. (3) It is not certain that such possessions may not sometimes occur now in connection with some cases of insanity.

APPLICATIONS. (1) These possessions by demons were typical of the moral power of Satan in the world. There are evils in the world as malign, as full of wretchedness and torment, as hard to cast out, as were these demons; such as intemperance, selfishness, bad habits, irreligion. (2) Like this mother we are identified with the victims. When we pray for them, we can say, Have mercy upon *us*. Some of them are our children, who have inherited evil tendencies from us, and we are partly to blame for their sins. We are more or less partakers of the evil of the world. (3) Jesus is the only one who can cast out these demons. We are to bring men to him, as our only help in this greatest need. — *P*.

III. Faith Triumphant over Many Obstacles. — Vers. 23-28.

FIRST OBSTACLE. The fact that this woman was a foreigner and a heathen, brought up without a knowledge of the true God, and in education and training opposed to the teachings and religion of Jesus. She must overcome her prejudices, — the prejudices of her countrymen, and the prejudices of the Jews who despised all heathen.

Her faith overcame this obstacle. That she went to Jesus at all shows her faith.

SECOND OBSTACLE. She came without invitation to one she had never seen, and who was of a race which despised both her race and religion, and who was trying to avoid all notice and attention (Mark 7).

She overcame this obstacle by the knowledge of what Jesus had already done in Galilee, and especially at an earlier time for people from her own country (Luke 6: 17), and by her knowledge that Jesus was thought to be the true Messiah from God.

23. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24. But he answered and said, ¹I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to ²dogs.

ously vexed with a devil. But ²³ he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, ²⁴ I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. And he answered ²⁶ and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast

¹ Matt. 10: 5, 6. Acts 3: 25, 26; 13: 46. Rom. 15: 8. ² Matt. 7: 6. Phil. 3: 2.

THIRD OBSTACLE. *Silence.* 23. But he answered her not a word. To all her entreaties he for a time kept silence. There was no response. *Why did Jesus thus hesitate and delay to answer her?* (1) Jesus, by this refusal, tries the woman's faith, that he may purify and deepen it. Her request must be won by earnest prayer, "lest the light winning should make light the prize."—*Prof. Carr.* (2) Also to prove her faith to his disciples. They were Jews, and must learn to intercede for a heathen woman, before they could carry the Gospel to the Gentiles.—*Schaff.* (3) Edersheim thinks that the key to Jesus' silence was her use of the expression "Thou Son of David," in which she seemed not to realize the true and world-wide nature of the true Messiah, but only a Messiah of the Jews, belonging to the Jews. He did not wish to endorse her narrow views by assenting to them, nor to make a denial of her request. He would let her think awhile; he would delay till she could see him in his true nature, by the conversation which followed. All this tried her faith, but its purpose was rather to lead her to the truth.

FOURTH OBSTACLE. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away. Dismiss her. The language does not indicate whether by healing or by giving a positive refusal to heal. The reasonable implication, however, is that they had endeavored to drive her away, as was done in other parallel cases (Matt. 19: 13; Luke 18: 39), but in vain.—*Abbott.* Dismiss her by granting her request, as is evident from our Saviour's answer in the next verse.—*G. W. Clark.* Jesus interprets their request as an intercession in behalf of the poor woman (ver. 24), which agrees better also with their natural sympathy and charity.—*P. Schaff,* in "Lange." The reason given is, *for she crieth after us.* It was an annoyance; it would draw the attention of others to them, which Jesus seemed especially desirous to avoid. Their compassion, also, was doubtless aroused toward one so importunate and having so much confidence in his ability to cure.—*G. W. Clark.*

FIFTH OBSTACLE. *Seeming refusal.* 24. I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Here Christ defines his own mission, not that of his disciples; but only the limits of his own personal and earthly ministry. It was not till after his death that the veil was rent, and by his death that he saves all who come unto him, whether Jew or Gentile.—*Abbott.* It was not a refusal, but a postponement, to educate her faith and train the disciples for their world-wide mission.—*Schaff.*

Why did Jesus confine his personal mission to the Jews? To have spread out his ministry farther during the brief period of his terrestrial career would simply have been to have thinned and weakened his influence. Whatever might have been gained *extensively* would have been lost *intensively.*—*Morison.* The very purpose of Jesus to save all men could be best accomplished by training a few thoroughly in the principles of his kingdom. There was not time in his short ministry to train more. Then the time for the wide diffusion of his kingdom among the Gentiles would not come till he had made the atonement for all by his death. It was necessary that at that time there should be some fully imbued with his teachings, and prepared to receive fuller measures of truth by the Holy Spirit. Therefore Jesus says, as in Mark, let the children *first* be filled. A very little fire can kindle a city or a world; but ten times as much heat as that little fire contains would not, if widely diffused, kindle anything.—*P.*

SIXTH OBSTACLE. 25. Then came she and worshipped him: drawing nearer to him wherever he was. She prostrated herself before him, in lowly and lovely adoration. Saying, Lord, help me. It is a beautiful importunity, a fitting memento and model to all who would call on the name of the Lord. She would not let her Saviour go. And he loved that it should be so.—*Morison.*

26. But he answered: not as giving his own opinion, but as expressing the popular feeling of which she was aware. It is not meet: fitting, proper. To take the children's

27. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

29. ¹And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh ²unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.

it to the dogs. But she said, 27 Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and 28 said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

And Jesus departed thence, 29 and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and he went up into the mountain, and sat

¹ Mark 7: 31. ² Matt. 4: 18.

bread, and to cast it to dogs (literally, the little dogs, domestic dogs). The "children" are the Jews; the "dogs" are the Gentiles. This was the name applied by the Jews to all outside the chosen race, the dog being in the East a symbol of impurity.—*Prof. Carr.* Jesus softens the usual harsh expression of the proverb into house dogs, or pet dogs, the companions and friends of the children. There was some reason lying at the base of the designation. The heathens around were, in the mass, exceedingly unclean and ferocious; barking too, incessantly, at the true God and true godliness.—*Morison.* Edersheim suggests that there is hope in the very expression; for the children and the domestic dogs had the same master, and all belonged to the home, though in different degrees. Mark adds another way of hope in the same direction in recording Jesus' expression, "Let the children first be filled." Jew and Gentile are both to be fed with the bread from heaven, only it should first be given to the Jew.—*P.*

27. And she said: in a spirit of beautiful submission, and most charming ingenuousness and ingenuity.—*Morison.* "It was in vain to try to weary out a mother's love." Not all the snows of her native Lebanon could quench the fire of love which was burning on the altar of her heart, and prompt as an echo came forth the glorious and immortal answer.—*Farrar.* Truth, Lord. She acquiesces in what Jesus says. The proverb is true; but out of its very truth she brings an argument for the granting of her request. Yet: rather, as in Rev. Ver., for even. It is not in spite of, but because of the truth of the proverb, that she argues for help. The dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Even if she were to be compared with the house or pet dogs, so much the more should Jesus give her the help she needed; for it would take nothing from the Jew's portion, but only be an overflow of his gracious acts which could not be used by them. She should, if a dog, be treated as well as a dog.

FAITH TRIUMPHANT. 28. Then Jesus answered . . . O woman, great is thy faith. He had been all along admiring it, and bringing it out into fuller and yet fuller development. He now expresses his admiration; for, when commendation is needed, and will encourage and cheer without puffing up, it is well and wise to give it.—*Morison.* (1) Her faith was great in its love, being for her daughter. (2) It was great in its earnestness. (3) It was great in its foundations, the power and love of the Messiah, and his past good deeds to others. (4) It was great in its humility, conquering self. (5) It was great in overcoming obstacles. (6) It was great in its nature; a perfect trust in the goodness and love of the Saviour. (7) It was great in its fruits.—*P.* And her daughter was made whole from that very hour: as she found on her return (Mark 7: 30); for she acted upon her faith and went home.

APPLICATION I. Sin in the heart is to be overcome by a faith like this woman's. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" from sin and its consequences. (1) An humble faith that gives up everything to be saved from sin; that owns the justice of God's condemnation. (2) A faith founded on the divine nature of the Saviour. (3) A faith encouraged by the fact that he has saved others. (4) A faith that pleads in spite of all obstacles. (5) A faith that faints not at delay. (6) A faith that acts upon God's promises. Those who have such a faith will find forgiveness and redemption from sin.—*P.*

APPLICATION II. The great evils of the world will be cast out through the same faith; a faith in Jesus Christ as the only power that can save; a persevering faith that takes no account of difficulties; an humble faith that cares more for the cause than for self; a faith that has learned to pray, to labor, and to wait.—*P.*

IV. The Manifold Blessings of the Gospel.—Vers. 29-31. 29. And Jesus departed from thence. His plans for retirement having been again deferred by the miracle just wrought and the notoriety it would bring. And came nigh unto the sea of

30. ¹And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet: and he healed them:

31. Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

there. And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet; and he healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing: and they glorified the God of Israel.

¹ Isa. 35: 5, 6. Matt. 11: 5. Luke 7: 22.

Galilee: in Decapolis, or "the region of the ten cities" (Mark 7: 31). The direction of the journey appears to have been (1) northward toward Lebanon, then (2) from the foot of Lebanon through the deep gorge of the Leontes to the sources of the Jordan, and thence (3) along its eastern bank into the regions of Decapolis. — *Maclear*. **Into a mountain.** The high lands on the west shore of the sea. **Sat down:** stopped there.

30. **And great multitudes.** There was considerable time for retirement on his journey, and during his stay here, before the multitudes found him out. **Lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others.** A great variety of diseases, four of which are named as specimens. Mark gives one case from among the number (Mark 7: 32-37), and relates a cure of a deaf man, with an impediment in his speech. **Maimed.** The Greek word translated *maimed* means strictly, *bent, crooked*; then more generally, *crippled* in the hands or feet. In Mark 9: 43 it is applied to the loss of a hand. It may here refer to persons whose limbs were so crippled by disease or wounds as to have lost all use of them. — *G. W. Clark*.

31. **And they glorified the God of Israel,** who had sent his Son to heal and help the people. Doubtless with these cures, as in other cases, Jesus taught the multitudes about the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 4: 23-25).

NOTE (1) These were most difficult cases of disease to heal. (2) No natural causes can possibly explain these manifestations of Christ's power. (3) The miracles were, both in manner and in matter, worthy of the Son of God.

THE OBJECT OF THESE MIRACLES. (1) They are the natural accompaniments of a divine being. He that is able to speak divine words will be able to do divine deeds. (2) Hence they were proofs of his divine mission. — *P*. (3) They were signs, not of power only or chiefly, but of the love, tenderness, pity, which were the true marks or "notes" of the kingdom of heaven. (4) Restoration to outward health was at once the pledge that the Son of Man had not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them, and often, we cannot doubt, served to strengthen that faith in the love of the Father, some degree of which was all but invariably required as an antecedent condition of the miracle (chap. 13: 58). — *Ellicott*. (5) He proved that he could heal all the evils of mankind. His healings foreshadowed the effect of his religion upon the world. Under its benign influences, the sick are cared for, the means of healing increase, the needy of all kinds are helped, enjoyments and comforts are multiplied. He makes the dead in sin to be alive, and reveals the resurrection and the life. He opens the eyes of the spiritually blind; he feeds the spiritually hungry; he is the light of the world. He casts out the devils of sin from the heart and from the community. He calms the tempest of sorrow with his "*Peace, be still.*" He delivers the soul from all its imperfections. — *P*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

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PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Ver. 22. The soul that feels its own needs or the needs of the world, will pray for mercy.

2. The individual soul and the world are "grievously vexed" with the devils of sin, lust, intemperance, selfishness, dishonesty, unkindness.

3. The Son of David is the only being which can cast them out.
4. Ver. 23. God is often silent for a time, and seems not to hear our prayers, but he is only preparing us for larger and better answers.
5. Vers. 23-26. Difficulties and hindrances are in our way, not to discourage and turn us back, but to strengthen our faith, enlarge our understanding, and confirm our character.
6. Ver. 24. Sinful men are like sheep lost in the wilderness.
7. When God is slow in giving, he only sets off his own gifts to advantage; he does not withhold them. Blessings long desired are sweeter when they come; if soon given, they lose much of their value. God reserves for thee that which he is slow to give thee, that you may learn to entertain a supreme desire and longing after it. — *Augustine*.
8. Vers. 27, 28. True faith is humble, earnest, persevering, importunate.
9. It is based on a consciousness of our needs, and the power of Jesus to relieve them.
10. Wherever man or woman is, by birth, or creed, or even sin, among those whom the judgment of the heirs of religious privileges counts among outcasts and heirs of shame, the excommunicated and the lost, there the thought that "the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs" may bring, as it has often brought, the faith that changes despair into something not far short of the full assurance of hope. — *Ellicott*.
11. Faith is the power which overcomes. All things are possible to faith.
12. Vers. 30, 31. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a blessing to the bodies and souls of men. Wherever Jesus is, there is healing and salvation. Comfort, prosperity, hospitals, schools, kindly deeds, love, and peace spring up within his presence as fruits and flowers under the genial influences of the sunshine in spring.
13. All who have the spirit of Jesus will seek to relieve the poor, the sick, the unfortunate.
14. We can bring the troubled and the sinful to Jesus for his aid.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

START from the standpoint of the last lesson, with the briefest REVIEW of the last two lessons, as interfering with Jesus' plan for a season of retirement.

THE MAP will be a real aid in fixing the circumstances of the lesson, by pointing out the places and tracing the journeys.

SUBJECT, — THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

I. SEARCHING FOR HELP IN A CASE OF GREAT NEED (vers. 21, 22).

The woman, her daughter, and the fearful malady are discussed in the *Explanatory*.

Why did she come to Jesus? Because from his reputation as the Messiah, and from what he had taught and done, she had reason to believe that the power of help was in him.

Illustrations. If people are cold, they will go to a place where there is a fire; if they are hungry, to a place where there is food. No pressure of invitation will draw a shivering crowd to a cold stove in a cheerless room. No ringing of ever so sweet a dinner-bell will draw people to empty tables. The supply for great wants draws men. The best invitation to church or to prayer-meeting is to make them satisfying, bringing cheer to the sorrowing, help and salvation to the sinful.

II. GREAT OBSTACLES OVERCOME BY FAITH (vers. 23-26). Have the scholars discover as many of these hindrances as they can, and the way in which they were overcome.

THE REASONS for so great a trial of faith. (1) To increase the faith. (2) To draw attention to the source of help, and bind the aided souls to Jesus. (3) To give instruction needed with the healing.

Illustrations. Faith developed by difficulties. (1) We see little of the power of water in the dewdrops or gently flowing river; but when the waters meet with great rocks or masses of ice in their channel, then they rise up, by means of these obstacles, into terrible power, as a Niagara or spring floods. (2) So steam, passing unimpeded into the air, is but a feeble mist; but when it is confined within the iron barriers of the engine, it develops a force that can move the machinery of the largest factories, and carry the largest ships across the ocean, in the face of wind and storm. (3) When the current of electricity is to be developed from an unnoticed flow into a great light, it must be made to pass through a smaller wire and a poor conductor. The obstacles bring out the brilliant electric light and the most intense heat. — *P.*

The darkness in the pathway of man's life
Is but the shadow of God's providence,
By the great Sun of Wisdom cast thereon;
And what is dark below is light in heaven.
— *Whittier*, "Tauler's Lesson of Faith."

Illustration. Pure gold loses nothing in the testing for alloys; the diamond shines all the more clearly for being rid of the rough surface which hid its light. — *H. C. Trumbull.*

III. THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH (vers. 27, 28).

Illustration. JUDSON'S EXPERIENCE. I never was deeply interested in any object, I never prayed sincerely and earnestly for anything, *but it came*; at some time, no matter at how distant a day; somehow, in some shape, probably the last I should have devised, it came. — *Adoniram Judson.*

"In spite of many broken dreams,
This have I truly learned to say:
The prayers I thought unanswered once,
Were answered in God's own best way."

IV. THE BLESSED FRUITS OF THE GOSPEL (vers. 29-31).

Illustration. Christ's miracles of healing were but a type of the continued influence of the Gospel. Wherever the Gospel prevails, life is prolonged, many lives are saved, hospitals spring up, the sick are cared for, the means of healing increase. So in all things the Gospel blesses our lives in this world, multiplies comforts and enjoyments, ministers to prosperity, to beauty, to education, to helpful arts. To see this, compare the Christian with the heathen world. — *P.*

IMPRESS TWO DUTIES.

(I.) The duty of bringing others to Jesus.

(II.) The duty of imitating Jesus in the healing and helping of men, both body and soul.

LESSON V. — JANUARY 29.

PETER CONFESSING CHRIST. — MATT. 16: 13-28.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.* — MATT. 10: 32.

TIME. — Summer of A.D. 29. A few days or weeks after the last lesson.

PLACE. — The region around Cesarea Philippi. This city was situated 25 or 30 miles northeast of the Sea of Galilee, near the head waters of the Jordan; about four miles east of Dan, the northernmost town of Palestine proper. It was at the foot of the lofty Hermon (9000 feet high), in the most picturesque part of Palestine.

JESUS. — About 32½ years old; in the third year of his ministry.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Mark 8: 27 to 9: 1; Luke 9: 18-27.

PRONUNCIATIONS. — Băn'iäs; Cēsārē'ā Philip'pī; Mäg'dälā.

INTERVENING HISTORY. — Soon after the last lesson Jesus fed 4000 on the eastern shore of Galilee (Matt. 15: 32-34). Then he crossed the sea to Magdala, on the west shore (Matt. 15: 39), where he discoursed with the Pharisees on the *Signs of the Times* (Matt. 16: 1-4). He re-crossed the sea to the northeast shore, near Bethsaida (Matt. 16: 4, 5), where he discoursed on the *Leaven of the Pharisees* (Matt. 16: 5-12). He walked with his disciples to Bethsaida (Mark 8: 22), where he healed a blind man. They continued their journey northward to the region of Cesarea Philippi, and on the way the first part of to-day's lesson was spoken.

INTRODUCTION.

This journey marks a turning-point or new era in the education of the disciples. Jesus reveals to them more clearly his nature as the Messiah, and for the first time shows them the necessity of his sufferings and death — first by his teachings, and then by the transfiguration scene.

13. When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, ¹Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?

Now when Jesus came into 13 the parts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the

¹ Mark 8: 27. Luke 9: 18.

EXPLANATORY.

I. What think ye of Jesus? — Vers. 13-16. 13. When Jesus came: in his journey from Bethsaida northward, along the road east of the Jordan (Mark 8: 22). Into

14. And they said, ¹Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16. And Simon Peter answered and said, ²Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: ³for flesh and blood hath

Son of man is? And they said, ¹⁴Some say John the Baptist: some, Elijah; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who ¹⁵say ye that I am? And Si-¹⁶mon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus ¹⁷answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood

¹ Matt. 14: 2. Luke 9: 7, 8, 9. ² Matt. 14: 33. Mark 8: 29. Luke 9: 20. John 6: 69. Acts 8: 37. ³ Eph. 2: 8.

the coasts: region or borders. Mark says "villages"; the smaller and more retired localities in the vicinity of the city, where he could teach his disciples with little interruption. **Cæsarea Philippi.** See *Place*. Herod the Great beautified it, and built a temple to Augustus. Later it was enlarged and beautified by Philip the tetrach, who gave to it the name of Cæsarea, in honor of his emperor (Tiberius Cæsar), adding Philippi (his own name) to distinguish it from Cæsarea on the Mediterranean, where Paul was imprisoned. **He asked his disciples:** while he was alone with them, praying (Luke 9: 18). His object seems to have been to draw out the faith of his disciples, and to reveal to them more fully his nature and his redeeming work. He would put into definite form what they had been gradually learning from his words and works—that he was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God. **Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?** He had very frequently used this title in speaking of himself; a title which the Jews (from Dan. 7: 13, 14) used to designate the Messiah. See Luke 22: 69, 70.

14. **Some say John the Baptist:** returned to life. Among these was Herod, as we saw in Lesson I. **Some, Elias;** *i.e.*, Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah, but not the Messiah himself. **And others, Jeremias:** the Greek form of Jeremiah. Of course, in the same sense as Elijah—a forerunner of the Messiah. "Jeremiah is placed first, because in Jewish canon he was placed first among the O. T. prophets," and was regarded as among the greatest. Perhaps also because of the character of his preaching, mingling denunciation with hope. **Or one of the prophets;** *i.e.*, "that one of the *old prophets is risen again*" (Luke 9: 19).

NOTE that this variety of opinion shows that the people were thinking and discussing, but had come to no certain beliefs. None of them speak of Jesus as the Messiah, for his appearance was in too great a contrast with their expectations. Dr. Morison well says: "The great body of the people could not entertain the idea that he was the glorious King of kings. What was there of the kingly in his circumstances? Where were the crown, the sceptre, the throne, the princely followers, the treasures, the armies?"

15. **But whom say ye that I am?** The emphasis is on *ye*. Twice does Jesus put this question, in order to impress upon them the importance of entertaining a *right* opinion concerning him. *Of all religious ideas none are so important as the right idea of Christ. — Genius of the Gospel.*

16. **And Simon Peter answered.** His original name was Simon or Simeon. The appellation Peter was given him by our Lord, when he first and but temporarily joined Jesus at the ford of Bethabara (John 1: 40, 41). — *Abbott*. Simon Peter was one of the quickest to perceive truth, and the readiest to utter it. He had no doubt formed his opinion fully before this time, but now Jesus' question was like a match to powder, and the convictions within him, condensed in a compact form, burst out from the fulness of his heart. **Thou art the Christ:** the Anointed One, the Messiah. "Christ" is the Greek, and "Messiah" is the Hebrew, for "Anointed." Anointing was the method by which kings, and sometimes prophets, were set apart for their work. **The Son of the living God.** The *Son of God* in the highest sense, which could be asserted of no other being. God is here styled *living God*, not only because he is distinguished from dead idols, but also because he is the author of all life and existence, hence self-existent, eternal. *The Son of the living God* was one who partook of that living, self-existent, and eternal nature. In this confession we have thus brought to view the humanity and the divinity of Christ. — *G. W. Clark*.

II. **The Secret of Spiritual Knowledge.** — Ver. 17. **Blessed art thou.** Because thou hast opened thy heart to the truth; because thou hast broken from the bondage of Jewish prejudice and worldly vision; because thou hast such firm confidence in such a

not revealed *it* unto thee, ¹ but my Father which is in heaven.

18. And I say also unto thee, That ²thou art Peter, and ³upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto 18 thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against

¹ 1 Cor. 2: 10. Gal. 1: 16. ² John 1: 42. ³ Eph. 2: 20.

Saviour. Faith, knowledge of Christ as the Son of God, almighty to save and infinite in love; a heart in which truth finds a natural soil; a character in harmony with Jesus; broader outlooks into truth—are all exquisite blessings.—*P. Simon Bar-jona*; i.e., son of Jonah. *Bar* is Aramaic (the Syriac Hebrew then in use) for *son*. Jonah should begin with a capital *J*, as in the Rev. Ver. **For flesh and blood: no man, no weak mortal, hath revealed this unto you.** It has not its origin in the mere human knowledge, in the workings of the human mind. **But my Father which is in heaven.** God flashed forth the truth, and Peter did not close his eyes that he might not see.

III. Foundation Stones of the Church.—Ver. 18. **And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter.** *Petros* in Greek, *Cephas* in Aramaic; a name given him long before in prophecy (John 1: 42). **And upon this rock (*petra*) I will build my church.** *Petros* usually means a stone, a piece of rock; *petra*, the rock in mass, the foundation rock. This verse has been the source of “an immensity of discussion.” We will give first what seems to us the **TRUE VIEW**: The church is represented as a great building, a temple of the living God. Jesus Christ is the builder, the architect. Peter, as one of the apostles, and a representative of all, filled with living experience and faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God, is a rock, one of the great foundation stones on which Christ is rearing the building, his enduring and glorious church.

1. This is the most natural interpretation of the words.

2. It agrees with other passages of the New Testament, which express the same truth; as Eph. 2: 20, where the church is said to be “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets”; and Rev. 21: 14, where the names of the twelve apostles are written on the twelve foundations of the wall of the city of God.

3. It is a fact, Peter was a chief among the foundations of the church of Christ. He was one of those who learned of Christ the truth, and preached it all his life. He was a witness to the resurrection of Christ. It was through his sermon that 3000 were converted on the day of Pentecost. And it is now generally agreed that Mark's gospel is the gospel that Peter preached.

4. This interpretation includes the others; for Peter was himself built upon Christ, and imbued with his spirit; so that Jesus was indeed the original substratum rock on which the church is built. And it was not merely Peter as a man, but Peter living in and by Christ,—Peter holding the great truth of Christ as the Son of God, who was the rock.

5. He was in all these things but one of the twelve. He was not the only rock. He was a representative of the others. In Eph. 2: 20 and Rev. 21: 14 the others are joined with him.

6. The chief objection to this view is the fact that the Roman Catholics found their doctrine of the supremacy of the Pope upon it. But this does not give Peter any supremacy over the other apostles; much less does it confer upon him the power to hand it down to his successors. We need not tear down a building because some one has woven cobwebs on its walls. Let us sweep away the cobwebs, and keep the building.—*P.*

APPLICATIONS.—**I.** Every one who possesses a like faith is, according to the measure of his faith, a Peter, that is, a rock; and Christ builds his church on this rock, that is, on this living experience of faith in the Christ, inspired in the hearts of men by the Spirit of God.—*Abbott.* **2.** The condition of true power in the church is always vital faith in Jesus Christ in the hearts of its members.—*Abbott.*

OTHER VIEWS.—There are two other principal views of this verse, held very strongly by their advocates, among whom are some of the leading scholars. **1.** That the rock is the confession of Peter; i.e., the Messiahship and divine sonship of Jesus. Here the rock is a doctrine, and indeed the central doctrine of the church. **2.** The other view is that the rock is Christ himself, who is, indeed, the foundation of the church (1 Cor. 3: 11). As if he had said, Thou art Peter, “a piece of rock”; and I will build my temple on the Rock of Ages, of which you are a portion, since you are filled with me.

19. ¹ And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

¹ Matt. 18: 18. John 20: 23.

THE CHURCH.—**I will build my church.** The word for church properly denoted a congregation or assemblage of people called out. In its technical Greek usage it denoted the assembly of the free citizens duly called out to transact the business of the community.—*Morison*. **And the gates of hell:** or Hades, the kingdom of Death, and hence of Satan, the king of Death.—Hades is regarded either as a castle, or, better, as a walled city or enclosure, in which the “gates” stand for the entire wall, and this again for all which it encloses. The meaning is, the realm of death shall have no power over it; it shall be indestructible.—*Prof. Kendrick*. Nothing in our Lord’s teaching is, as measured by man’s judgment, more wonderful than the utterance of such a prophecy at such a time. It was a time of seeming failure. He was about to announce his coming death as a malefactor; and yet it was at this moment that he proclaimed the perpetuity and triumph of the society which as yet, it may be said, existed only in the germ.—*Ellicott*.

IV. The Keys of the Kingdom.—Vers. 19, 20. 19. **And I will give unto thee:** representing also the other apostles, for the history shows that nothing was conferred upon Peter that the others also did not receive. In Matt. 18: 18, 19, the others are specially included in the promise in the last part of this verse. See also John 20: 19-23. **The keys of the kingdom of heaven.** 1. **THE KEY.** The ancient Oriental key usually bore not much resemblance to the artistic little metallic instrument which we mean by the word, and which Italian painters pictured in Peter’s hands. It was a wooden apparatus, which often would heavily lade a man’s arm. There was a crook at one end so that it could be worn about the neck as a badge of office.—*Abbott*.

2. **THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.** The phrase “kingdom of heaven” in the Gospels never means the visible, external, organic church, and rarely, if ever, the future state in contrast with the present, but the reign of God in the individual soul, or in the community.—*Abbott*. It means very nearly the same thing as “the church” in the previous verse, the whole community of believers, the new dispensation of grace. Here it is represented under the figure of a city with gates, or of a large house with gates for entrance, and doors of treasure-rooms.

3. **THE SYMBOL OF THE KEYS.** (a) In great houses and palaces there was of necessity a steward or general manager of the establishment, to whom were committed the keys of the gates and of the treasure-house and storerooms, and who thus had a general authority and control over the whole. (b) “The scribes of Israel were thought of as stewards of the treasures of divine wisdom (13: 52). When they were admitted to their office they received, as its symbol, the ‘key of knowledge’ (Luke 11: 52), which was to admit them to the treasure-chambers of the house of the interpreter.”—*Ellicott*. When the Jews made a man a *doctor of the law*, they put into his hand the key of the closet in the temple where the sacred books were kept, and also tablets to write upon; signifying by this, that they gave him authority to teach, and to explain the Scriptures to the people.—*Martin*.

4. **THE STATEMENT.** From the above facts we learn that in giving the power of the keys, Jesus made Peter and the other apostles his prime ministers, his authoritative representatives on earth in the developing and organizing of his kingdom after his death. Somebody must have this authority, and it was best committed to those who had been trained under the personal supervision of Jesus, and afterwards endowed by the abundant gift of the enlightening and guiding Holy Spirit. (1) They would be taught the true doctrines of the Gospel, through which those who believed would come into the kingdom. (2) They would be the instrumentality by which many would enter the kingdom. Thus, Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost turned the key which admitted three thousand into the kingdom in one day. (3) It gave them authority, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to decide the many administrative questions which would come up, as the admission of the Gentiles into the church (see Peter’s vision, Acts 10); whether the Gentiles must conform to Jewish rites, decided in the Council at Jerusalem, under the leadership of Peter (Acts 15); the appointment of deacons; the case of Simon Magus, and of Ananias and Sapphira. (4) It gave them the key to the interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures. (5) It gave them the key to the treasure-house of Gospel knowledge. It was through their witness and preaching that we have the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament, which are the authoritative

20. ¹ Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

21. ² From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

22. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

ven. Then charged he the 20 disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.

From that time began Je- 21 sus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up. And Peter took 22 him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never

¹ Mark 8: 30. Luke 9: 21. ² Mark 8: 31; 9: 31; 10: 33. Luke 9: 22.

rule of the church in all ages. The power of the keys is the assurance of the inspiration of the New Testament. — *P.*

POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. In some degree all Christians have the power of the keys. On their faithfulness and true living and earnestness often depends whether those living in dark places shall see the light, whether the heathen shall receive the Gospel. So, too, the Christian has the keys to the treasure-house of divine truth. The Holy Spirit will guide him in his search, enlighten his eyes, and he shall continually see new treasures in the Word and works and providence of God.

And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, etc. This is an explanation and confirmation of the gift of the keys, though some refer the keys to the admission of *persons*, and the binding and loosing to the permitting or forbidding of *things*. The phrases *whatsoever thou shalt bind*, and *whatsoever thou shalt loose*, were common Hebrew expressions, having a definite and well-known meaning. *To bind* meant *to forbid*, or *to declare forbidden*. *To loose* meant *to allow*, or *to declare allowable*. — *Morison*. **Bound in heaven; i.e.,** receive the sanction and authority and approbation of God. They were to be guided infallibly in the organization of the Church, 1st, by the teaching of Christ; and, 2d, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. — *Barnes*. For examples of the exercise of this power, see Acts 1: 15-22; 5: 3-10; 6: 2-4; 11: 1-18; 15: 4-29. The power in this sense ceased with inspiration. — *G. W. Clark*.

20. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man, etc. Why? (1) Because the apostles were not as yet fully schooled in the doctrine of the true nature of Christ's kingdom and office, and would not be so till the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them. — *Wordsworth*. (2) Because the people would be turned away from their spiritual needs and the new life which was essential to the coming of the kingdom, to the desire to realize the outward glories of their false conception of the Messiah as king. This danger was entirely removed after the crucifixion. (3) The announcement that Jesus was the Messiah would be likely to excite tumult and rebellion against the Roman government, the people trying to make Jesus the leader of the revolt. This would interfere with his plan of a spiritual kingdom. — *P.*

V. The Way to the Kingdom is through the Cross. — Vers. 21-23. 21. From that time forth: because now after their full recognition of him as the Messiah, they were prepared to know more about the way the true Messiah must come into his kingdom, and they needed this knowledge to correct and complete their views of the Messiah, and to prepare them for the events now hastening on. **Began Jesus.** This was his first announcement of this great fact. **How that he must go:** not because he had not power to do otherwise, but because it was necessary to the accomplishment of his work of redemption. **Unto Jerusalem.** The capital of the Jewish nation, the symbol of the church, the place of the temple, and its sacrifices which he had come to fulfil. **Suffer many things:** as described in the last chapters of the Gospel. **And be killed:** by crucifixion, thus making the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. **And be raised again the third day.** The resurrection of Jesus was essential to the proof that he was the true Messiah, essential to his work of redemption, and reigning as king at the right hand of God (1 Cor. 15: 14-18).

22. Then Peter took him: one side, apart, to speak to him privately. **Began to rebuke him.** He only began — for he was soon interrupted — to find fault with what Jesus had been saying, and to argue against its truth. It was love to Jesus, devotion to his cause, mingled with self-confidence which led Peter to speak thus. **Saying, Be it far from thee, Lord.** The plan of redemption outlined by Jesus was so contrary to all Peter's expectations

23. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: ¹thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

24. ²Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

be unto thee. But he turned, ²³ and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumblingblock unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men. Then said Jesus unto his ²⁴ disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross,

¹ Rom. 8: 7. ² Matt. 10: 38. Mark 8: 34. Luke 9: 23; 14: 27. Acts 14: 22. ² Tim. 3: 12.

and hopes, so completely opposite to every picture of the Messiah king and his reign, that it seemed inconceivable to Peter. It was absurd, ruinous, a deathblow to their own hopes, and a triumph to their enemies.

23. **But he turned:** turned round to the disciples (Mark 8: 33). **And said unto Peter:** publicly before them all. **Get thee behind me, Satan.** Satan means "adversary," the great "enemy" of all good, used in the Saviour's time as a proper name. In this suggestion, that he might gain the crown without the cross, and attain a kingdom of this world, the Christ saw the recurrence of the temptation which had offered him the glory of those kingdoms, on condition of his drawing back from the path which the Father had appointed for him (Matt. 4: 1-11). — *Ellicott*. He did not call his apostle a *satan*, a *devil*, but he looked for the moment through Peter, and saw behind him his old enemy, cunningly making use of the prejudices and impulsive honesty of the undeveloped apostle. — *Morison*. **Thou art an offence:** a stumbling-block instead of a foundation stone; a hindrance by placing this temptation before me, by your blindness in not understanding the true nature and work of the Messiah. **Thou savourest not (mindest not) the things that be of God:** God's plan of salvation and work of the Messiah, as just before revealed by Jesus (ver. 21). **But those that be of men:** the natural human view of the Messiah, a worldly kingdom, riches, honor, glory, and triumph.

VI. **The Principle of the Cross applied to Men.** — Ver. 24. Jesus, in the remaining verses of the chapter, applies to his disciples the principles on which he must himself carry out the work of the Messiah as he had just revealed them. The way to the Messiah's crown was through the cross. The way to their own crown of eternal life was by the same path. And by the illustrations they could understand as applied to themselves, they could begin to perceive the reasons why Jesus must suffer before he could reign. — *P*.

24. **Then said Jesus unto his disciples:** and to the multitudes also whom he now called to him (Mark 8: 34). **If any man will come after me.** "Will" here is more than auxiliary, denoting the future. It is a separate verb, — willeth, desires, wishes. *To come after me* is to be my disciple, my follower; to go to the work, the joy, the heaven, the kingdom to which I am going. **Let him deny himself:** renounce self as his master, and accept Christ as his master. This precept is meant to rebuke (1) self-will, (2) self-indulgence, (3) self-righteousness. — *C. S. Robinson*.

SELF-DENIAL. Self-denial for the sake of self-denial, as if our pains and troubles were a sweet incense to God, and he were the more pleased the more we suffer, is contrary to Christ's teaching and promises. St. Paul calls such self-denial a *doctrine of devils* (1 Tim. 4: 1-3), because it belies God's goodness, makes men self-righteous, and keeps them from the true self-denial which Christ requires. *What is the self-denial which Christ requires?* It is to deny ourselves everything wrong, no matter how pleasant it may be; it is to give up what is pleasant and right in itself, when we can thereby best aid the cause of Christ and the redemption of our fellow-men; it is to do right, to serve Christ, to promote his kingdom at whatever cost; it is to make Christ first and everything else second. — *P*. **And take up his cross.** Luke adds, *daily*; not once, but all the time. The cross is the pain of the *self-denial* required in the preceding words.

THE CROSS. (1) *The cross is the symbol of doing our duty, even at the cost of the most painful death.* Christ obeyed God, and carried out his work for the salvation of men, though it required him to die upon the cross in order to do it. And ever since, the cross has stood as the emblem, not of suffering, but of suffering for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, as the highest ideal of obedience to God at any and every cost. (2) Each one must take up his own cross. (3) He must take it up voluntarily, accept of it, not merely endure what is laid upon him. (4) He is to do it as a follower of Christ. "The cross for the cross, never; but the cross for the Lord, always" (*Monod.*). (5) The cross is a test. It is the sieve that

25. For ¹whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or ²what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

27. ³For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father ⁴with his angels; ⁵and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

and follow me. For whoso-²⁵ ever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man ²⁶ be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? For the Son of man shall ²⁷ come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds.

¹ Luke 17: 33. John 12: 25. ² Ps. 49: 7, 8. ³ Mark 8: 38. Luke 9: 26. ⁴ Dan. 7: 10. Zech. 14: 5. Matt. 25: 31. ⁵ Ps. 62: 12. Prov. 24: 12. Rom. 2: 6. 1 Cor. 3: 8. Rev. 2: 23.

sifts out false followers. It is the *Ithuriel's spear*, which tests whether they are disciples in deed and in truth, or only seekers after the loaves and fishes. — *P.*

And follow me. To follow Christ is to take him for our master, our teacher, our example; to believe his doctrines, to uphold his cause, to obey his precepts, and to do it though it leads to heaven by the way of the cross. It is not merely to do right, but to do right for his sake, under his leadership, and according to his teaching. — *P.*

VII. The Bad Bargain. — Vers. 25, 26. 25. Whosoever will (willeth, determines to) save his life. Life here in the original is the same word that is translated *soul* in the next verse. It is much more than existence: life means one's self; all that makes life worth living, — the character, the blessedness, which give life or the soul its value. So that the meaning is: whosoever makes the pleasures and enjoyments of life his chief aim, determines to have worldly blessings and rewards, even at the expense of righteousness, religion, and the service of his master. **Shall lose it.** Shall lose all that makes life worth living; shall lose even the earthly rewards which he called his life, and much more eternal blessedness. **And whosoever will** (is willing to) **lose his life:** to give up those outward things which are desirable and blessed in themselves, which worldly men seek chiefly, and which seem to make the life on earth happy and worth living, — honors, riches, pleasures, power. But note this is to be **for my sake, and**, Mark adds, *for the Gospel's*. The mere loss of life has no promised blessing. It is only loss for the sake of Christ that has this promise. Multitudes of people lose their lives for gain, for pleasure, for fashion. Each of these has more martyrs than the cross ever required; but the loss was without compensation or hope. But whosoever loses for the love of Christ, for the sake of preaching and advancing the gospel, **shall find it**, — shall have a blessedness and glory which will a thousand times compensate for every loss. The loss was temporal, the gain is eternal; the loss was small, the gain infinite; the loss was of outward things, the gain is in the nature of the soul itself. — *P.*

26. **For what is a man profited.** Some have said that this regarding of *profit* and *reward* is only another form of selfishness. But selfishness is the seeking our own good at the expense or injury of others. To seek what is profitable is not selfishness, but wisdom. It is simply folly to throw away life, or pleasure, or wealth, for no good whatever. The wise man wants to know what good will come of it, to himself or others. Only a fool will have no regard to profit. — *P.* **If he shall gain the whole world:** all the pleasure, the wealth, the sources of enjoyment, the honors, the blessings, this world can give. But note this *if*. Very few that lose their souls gain the whole world, or but the smallest part thereof. **And lose his own soul.** *Soul* here is the same word that is translated *life* in the previous verse. The meaning is the same, for the life is the life principle inherent in the soul, — the soul in its active enjoyment, enduring nature, and capabilities. Thus, if a man in gaining the whole world becomes lost (Luke), as on a desolate island, or if he dies in the process, or if he loses his health and is racked with pain, or if he loses his innocence and is tormented with remorse, what has such a person gained? All this applies with double force to the eternal loss of character, happiness, and peace. — *P.* **Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?** There is no compensation for the loss of the soul. All other losses may be repaired. The loss of the soul is without remedy and without hope.

VIII. The Crown after the Cross. — Vers. 27, 28. 27. **For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father.** The time is coming when all these days of humiliation and the cross will pass away, and Jesus shall be a triumphant king. This refers to the completed work of redemption and the day of judgment. The redeeming work of Jesus as the Messiah is seen in one view in its glorious process and final triumph. **Reward**

28. Verily I say unto you, ¹ There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Verily I say unto you, There ²⁸ be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

¹ Mark 9: 1. Luke 9: 27.

every man according to his works. The real character resolves itself into the real doing, working, acting, of the soul. He who is meet in character for bliss shall have bliss adjudged to him. He who is not meet for bliss shall be condemned. See 25: 31-46. — *Morison*. Everything in the judgment will be according to truth. The "well done" will be spoken only to those who have done well; and "enter into the joy of your Lord" only to those who have been faithful to their Lord.

28. There be some standing here, etc.: there were some before him who would live to see the beginnings of this triumph, the establishment of the new kingdom, and thus the pledge of his final coming glory. The apostles lived to see the marvellous day of Pentecost, when Christ began to come in his kingdom, and three thousand were converted in a day; and some of them to see the end of the Jewish dispensation in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the establishment of the Christian dispensation with tens of thousands of disciples throughout the civilized world.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On Cesarea Philippi, see *Land and Book*, new ed. 11: 470-485; Tristram's *Land of Israel*; *Rob Roy on the Jordan*; Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 397, etc. On the rock and the keys, see Pinnock's *Christ our King*. Sermons by Wesley, "The Important Question"; Saurin, "The Worth of a Soul"; Jeremy Taylor, "The Foolish Exchange." Mark Hopkins' *Sermons*, "Self-denial," ver. 24; "Life," ver. 25. Dr. Huntingdon's sermon on "The Cross a Burden or a Glory," in *Christian Believing and Living*.

Excellent ILLUSTRATIONS can be found in *The Cross-Bearer*; *The City of No Cross*; the poem *The Changed Cross*; Bowes' *Illustrative Gatherings*, second series, p. 70, "Cross-Bearing"; *Biblical Treasury*, vol. vii. § 1383, "How a Cross ceases to be a Cross"; *Gott-hold's Emblems*, p. 307, "The Christian without a Cross," pp. 238-240, "The Cipher," and "The Number before It," p. 166, "The Soul-Venders"; Bowes' *Illustrative Gatherings*, second series, p. 358, "A Soul for an Estate," p. 450, "The Dying Words of Severus"; Spencer's *Things New and Old*, p. 453, § 1598, "The Value of the Soul"; *Biblical Treasury*, vol. ix. § 1821, "A Life for a Flower."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Vers. 13-15. There are still many varying opinions as to who Christ is. The outside world rate him far too low, and thus miss the blessing.

2. Ver. 16. Christ's character, works, and kingdom on earth, compel us to believe that he is the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

3. Ver. 17. Those have the strongest faith in the divine Son of God who live nearest to God and abide under the influence of his Spirit.

4. Ver. 18. The true church is sustained and built up by those who have a living faith in the Divine Son of the living God.

5. The true church with the indwelling Christ is safe against all the powers of the enemy.

6. Ver. 19. Every Christian has, in his degree, the keys of the kingdom of heaven. By doing his duty in praying, giving, working, souls will be brought in. By neglect, they will be left out.

7. The rules and administration of every church should be so guided by the Spirit, that what they forbid or permit on earth shall be approved in heaven.

8. Unless a church has the divine Christ dwelling in it, it will be too strenuous as to forms, or too loose as to practice.

9. Vers. 21-23. We are ever tempted to substitute worldly wisdom in religious affairs for the divine wisdom and methods; but the suggestion proceeds from Satan.

10. "Good men," says Richard Baxter, "ofttimes do the devil's work, though they know it not."

11. Ver. 24. Christ sets before those who would become his disciples the difficulties and trials, as well as the joys and prospects, of his service.

12. We are to renounce the world as *master*, but to use it as *servant*. Like fire, the world is a good servant, but a terrible master.

13. Christ's cross is the sweetest burden that ever I bore. It is such a burden as wings to a bird, or sails to a ship. — *Rutherford*.

14. Ver. 25. No man ever really gained anything by doing wrong.

15. It is wonderful for how small a price men will exchange their souls.

16. Ver. 26 is an unanswerable arithmetical problem. Only an infinite series can express the answer.

17. Vers. 27, 28. The triumph of Christ and his kingdom is certain. All of us can see the signs of his coming, and the dawning rays of his glory.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

TRACE ON THE MAP the journeyings of Jesus from the eastern shore of the Lake of Galilee, where we left him in our last lesson to Cesarea Philippi, in whose neighborhood we find him in this lesson, touching also upon what was said and done in each place.

SUBJECT, — FROM THE CROSS TO THE CROWN.

I. WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST (vers. 13-17). The various opinions now prevalent, and the necessity and blessedness of the right view of Christ.

II. THE BUILDING OF HIS CHURCH (vers. 18-20). Do not spend too much time discussing disputed points, but get quickly at the truth, and its applications to ourselves.

III. THE CROSS OF CHRIST THE WAY TO HIS KINGDOM (vers. 21-23). The atonement clearly set forth as the only way by which Jesus could really become the Saviour and the King of the world; so contrary to the Jewish expectations for their Messiah. This is an object lesson for us.

IV. TAKING UP THE CROSS OUR WAY TO HIS KINGDOM (vers. 24-26). This is full of practical applications.

THE BOOK. — THE CROSS-BEARER.

THE POEM. — THE CHANGED CROSS.

Lay emphasis on the ways men try to save their lives, and how giving up all to Christ is the only possible way of really saving them.

V. THE CROWN (vers. 27, 28). Christ certain to succeed. His kingdom will come. The glory of the Father will crown his life. And so will it be with all, — the crown after the cross.

LESSON VI. — FEBRUARY 5.

THE TRANSFIGURATION. — MATT. 17: 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.* — LUKE 9: 35.

TIME. — Summer of A.D. 29; a week after the last lesson; in the night.

That it was in the night is inferred (1) from their coming down from the mount the next day (Luke 9: 37); (2) from the fact that the usual time of prolonged prayer, on the part of Jesus, was at night (Matt. 14: 23, 24; Luke 6: 12, etc.); (3) from the sleepiness of the apostles.

PLACE. — Probably Mt. Hermon, or some of its spurs, in the vicinity of Cesarea Philippi, where Jesus and his disciples were the week before, as we saw in our last lesson.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Mark 9: 2-13; Luke 9: 28-36.

INTRODUCTION.

A week passed after Jesus' revelation of himself to his disciples as a suffering Messiah. Of what took place in this week we know nothing.

The place, too, of the transfiguration scene is also unknown, as are almost all the places in which occurred the most sacred events of Jesus' life, probably because such a place would become a shrine, and be visited as peculiarly holy, while God would have the hearts of men everywhere to be holy places, and all the world holy ground.

This lesson is a wise, beautiful, and instructive sequel to the one we have just studied.

1. And ¹after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart,

And after six days Jesus ^x taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a

¹ Mark 9: 2. Luke 9: 28.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Scene of the Transfiguration.—Ver. 1. And after six days. Six days after the conversation recorded in our last lesson. Luke says, "*about an eight days.*" *About*, not exactly. Luke's *eight* days include the fractional days at the beginning and end of the day of the conversation and the day of the transfiguration. Mark's *six* days are the six complete days intervening between them. Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother . . . apart: from the other nine disciples, who were left at the base of the mountain, as we see by the events of the following morning (vers. 14-16). In the evening Jesus took these three choice ones with him to spend the night in prayer upon the mountain heights (Luke 9: 28). They were Christ's only companions in Gethsemane (Mark 14: 32-42). They alone witnessed the resurrection of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5: 37; Luke 8: 51).—*Abbott*.

WHY DID HE TAKE THESE THREE? (1) They were the élite of the Master's elect.—*Morison*. The sons of thunder and the man of rock.—*Farrar*. The flower and crown of the apostolic band,—Peter, who loved him so much; John, whom he loved so much; and James, who should first attest that death could as little as life separate from his love.—*Trench*. (2) They were the most advanced in the knowledge of Jesus and of his kingdom, so that they were *best* able to receive new light, new visions of truth. All their faithfulness, love, and consecration to their master had prepared them for these higher experiences. There is no way to the best things of God, the brightest visions, the sweetest experiences, the largest truths, except through the faithful use of daily life in work, in faith, and in love. (3) These three were a sufficient number of witnesses to attest the facts to the world. (4) By having so small a number it would be more easy to keep till after the resurrection these views of Christ from the multitude who would at this time be almost certain to make a bad use of them, by being led either to disbelief, or to looking too much at outward glories, and hence to trying to make Jesus an earthly king.—*P*. Bringeth them up into a high mountain. The exact mountain is unknown, but most modern scholars incline to the opinion that it was Mount Hermon, while tradition, dating back to the fourth century, and almost unquestioned for 1000 years, placed the scene on Mount Tabor.

HERMON. Mount Hermon, at whose foot lies Cesarea Philippi and the sources of the Jordan, rises over 9000 feet above the Mediterranean. Its top is partially crowned with snow all the year round. Its name, Hermon, means "a peak," but the Sidonians called it Sirion, "glittering," as a coat of mail in the sun.

THE REASONS for believing some part of Hermon was the scene of the transfiguration, are (1) Jesus and his disciples were in this vicinity within a week of the transfiguration. (2) Mark 9: 30 represents Jesus as passing through Galilee after the scene on the mount, as if he had been without its limits; while Tabor, the only other site suggested, is within Galilee. (3) It was a high mountain, more than four times as high as Tabor. (4) "It was well suited for the scene by its height, seclusion, and snowy splendor." (5) There is no authority in the tradition which favors Mount Tabor. (6) Tabor had a Roman fortification and town upon its top in the time of Christ.—*P*.

II. The Sweet Hour of Prayer.—Luke (9: 28) tells us that Jesus went up into the mountain to pray; and that the Transfiguration took place *while he prayed*. So it was at his baptism; *as he prayed* the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him as a dove (Luke 3: 21, 22). Not long before, at the feeding of the 5000, he had spent the night hours in a mountain alone praying. (1) These examples are doubtless only glimpses of the Saviour's habit of prayer. (2) Jesus desired to hold spiritual communion alone with his Father. He seems to have needed it often, and to have found strength and comfort and power through it. Every disciple of Jesus needs solitary communion with God. There are battles to be fought, great questions to be settled, consecration to be made, power to be received, in which the soul needs to be alone with God. So Jesus bids us enter into our closets to pray in secret. And his experience on the mountain was a fulfilment of the promise that the Father who seeth in secret shall reward openly. (3) Jesus took the three with him, not only for their good, and because they needed the solitary hours of communion

2. And was transfigured before them : and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

3. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

high mountain apart: and he 2
was transfigured before them:
and his face did shine as the
sun, and his garments became
white as the light. And be- 3
hold, there appeared unto
them Moses and Elijah talk-

with God, but doubtless because there was comfort in the nearness of those who *could* understand and sympathize with him, and to whom he could reveal something of his inner life. The disciples, too, were doubtless praying. And to them the promise was fulfilled "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18: 20). — *P.* (4) Lange thinks it probable, that, in consequence of the announcement of his approaching sufferings, deep depression had taken possession of the hearts of the twelve. They had spent these six days, respecting which the sacred records preserve unbroken silence, in a gloomy stupor. Jesus was anxious to rouse them out of this feeling; and, in order to do this, he had recourse to prayer. *The glorification of Jesus was an answer to prayer, and the means employed by God to bring about the desired result.* The connection between the prayer of Jesus and his transfiguration is expressed in Luke by the preposition *ἐν* (*in, by means of*, his praying), which denotes more than simultaneousness (whilst he prayed), and makes his prayer the cause of this mysterious event. — *Godet.*

III. **The Revelation of Christ's Glory.** — Ver. 2. And was transfigured before them: *i.e.*, in their presence, while they were awake, as Luke specially notes in 9: 32. The original word for *transfigured* is elsewhere in the New Testament (except in the parallel, Mark 9: 2) rendered "transformed" (as Rom. 12: 2; 2 Cor. 3: 18), and is used of a spiritual change. It is a change not of *substance*, but of *quality and appearance*. — The fashion of his countenance was altered (Luke), by being lighted with radiance both from without and from within. — *Alford.* The infinite fullness of the Spirit was poured out over his whole being: the heavenly glory of his nature, which was still concealed under his earthly appearance, now broke forth. — *Lange's Leben Jesu.* And his face did shine as the sun. Nothing less than the brightest and most glorious of all objects within human knowledge — so bright that it destroys the eye to gaze directly upon it — could express the radiant glories of Jesus' face, when his heavenly nature shone through the veil of his flesh. — *P.* The face of Moses had shone (Ex. 34: 29) but as the moon, with a borrowed, reflected light; but Christ's shone as the sun, with an innate, inherent light. — *Matthew Henry.* And his raiment was white as the light: *i.e.*, luminously white, "as no fuller on earth can white them" (Mark), *i.e.*, with a supernatural whiteness; "white and glistering" (Luke), *i.e.*, flashing. As Christ took on him human nature and condition for converse with man, so here, it appears to me, he is represented as taking on the form and condition of the spirits, for the purpose of communion with the spiritual world. — *Abbott.*

IV. **Moses and Elijah talking with Christ.** — Ver. 3. And, behold, there appeared unto them (*i.e.*, the disciples) Moses and Elias: the Greek form of *Elijah*. These persons were really present. It was not a vision, as is plain from the account of Luke. — *Schaff.* The implication is that they not only saw the appearance, but recognized in the persons Moses and Elijah, as is evident from Peter's proposition (ver. 4). — *Abbott.* Moses and Elijah were the appropriate representatives of *the Law and the Prophets*. And as all the distinguishing peculiarities of *the Law and the Prophets* pointed, as with outstretched fingers, to the Messiah, and waited for their accomplishment in his person and in his work, it is not to be wondered at that they talked together, as we learn from Luke (9: 31), "of the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." *The decease*, that was the keystone of the arch of glory. — *Morison.*

NOTE (1) the peculiarity of the ending of the earthly life of these two, "of whom one had not died (2 Kings 2: 11), and the other had no sooner tasted of death than his body was withdrawn from under the dominion of death and of him that had the power of death" (Deut. 34: 6; Jude 9). — *Cambridge Bible.* And thus with their resurrection bodies they were peculiarly fitted to appear on this occasion as examples of the complete redemption of man, of the results which Jesus by his sacrifice was seeking for all the world. — *P.*

NOTE (2) we may also think of them as representative men in their heavenly relationships, — a sort of delegation from the goodly company of patriarchs and saints gathered to their upper home. — *Cowles.*

NOTE (3) both, like the greater one with whom they spoke, had endured that supernatural fast of forty days and nights; both had been on the holy mount in the visions of God. — *Alford.*

MOSES in addition to the facts noted above was (1) the giver of the Law, and the founder of the Jewish Dispensation, which had been for centuries preparing the way for Christ, and which was to be transfigured and transformed by Christ into the heavenly and glorious dispensation of the Gospel. (2) Moses was a type of Christ and foretold his coming (Deut. 18: 15, 18). (3) Through him had been instituted the sacrifices which Christ fulfilled and which explained his sacrifices on the cross which so much troubled the disciples.

ELIJAH was (1) the representative of the prophets who foretold the coming of the Christ, and prepared the way for him. (2) He was the one whose character and spirit and work reappeared in John the Baptist. (3) The prophets, of whom Elijah was the representative, had expressly foretold the sufferings of the Messiah as well as his kingly glory. — *P.*

V. **The Object of the Transfiguration.** 1. *Encouragement to his disciples.* In our last lesson we saw how Jesus had given his disciples glimpses of his sufferings and death, which had startled and shocked their faith, since the Lord's plan for his Messiah was so entirely contrary to their expectations and hopes. He had also promised them that he would come again in triumphant glory. Now he shows them the truth itself. They see, so that they may believe. They look upon the crown beyond the cross. The veil is parted, and they behold the glorious realities on which the future of the Messiah and his work are founded.

2. *Their faith is strengthened by seeing the true nature of Jesus.* Hitherto they had seen Jesus only in his human form, with the flashes of divinity that shone through his miraculous works and heavenly words. It must have tried their faith sometimes, to believe that one in a human form like their own could be divine. Now they see his real nature, "his inherent and essential divinity blazing out for once through the serge and sackcloth of his humanity." They see Jesus "as the glorious Sun of Righteousness, the Light of the World, the Brightness of the Father's glory, and the visible Image of the invisible God." — *R. R. Meredith.* Henceforth their faith that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, will remain unshaken, and they can proclaim that which they do *know*, and bear witness to what they have seen (2 Pet. 1: 16; John 1: 14).

3. To those who believe that our Lord's human nature was in very deed, sin only excepted, like unto ours, it will not seem over-bold to suggest that for him too this might have been a time of conflict and of trial. — *Ellicott.* So that the outshining of his glory, the visit of Moses and Elias, and the voice of approval may have strengthened him, and aided the victory.

4. The subject of the conversation, his decease (exodus, departure; *i.e.*, by his death on the cross, Luke 9: 31) would enable the disciples to see the importance and necessity of that which they most dreaded, and which was to them the greatest mystery. The atonement on the cross was the great event of the world's history; this was the real founding of the kingdom of God; this was the culmination of the salvation brought by the Messiah; this was the great act to which all the sacrifices appointed by Moses looked forward, and which gave them meaning and value. It was the beginning and source of the world-wide development of the kingdom of God, and of those glorious times which the prophets had foretold.

5. They learned by the examples before them something of what Jesus meant by his resurrection, a difficulty over which they had stumbled (Matt. 16: 21, 22).

6. It showed them the real harmony and unity of the Old and the New Dispensations. This was one of the most difficult things for them to understand, — how the two dispensations, so different, could yet be as one; how the Gospel was the fulfilment of Moses and the prophets; how the new kingdom was the flower and fruit growing on the old tree. So it is, in our transfiguration experiences with Christ: the difficulties of the great doctrines of grace vanish, and all become harmonious; and Christians who rejoice in these lofty experiences together, though of many different denominations, yet become one in Christ Jesus. *Here alone* can be found the true unity of the church; as "it has been said, whether by poetry or science it matters not, there is a certain point in the upper air in which all discordant sounds of the earth, — the rattle of wheels, the chimes of bells, the roll of the drum, the laugh of the child, the moan of the beggar, — meet and blend in perfect harmony." — *Dr. William Adams.*

7. Their faith and hope were greatly strengthened by seeing examples or specimens, as it were, of redeemed humanity. They saw the rewards of faithful service which would encourage them in many a trial. Here they saw specimen fruits of the Gospel they were to preach. It was that men might become such glorious beings as they now saw in Moses and Elijah that they were suffering and toiling. It was worth every cost to bring men into such a state. — *P.*

4. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5. ¹ While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, ² This is my beloved Son, ³ in whom I am well pleased; ⁴ hear ye him.

ing with him. And Peter answered, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles: one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

¹ 2 Pet. 1: 17. ² Matt. 3: 17. Mark 1: 11. Luke 3: 22. ³ Isa. 42: 1. ⁴ Deut. 18: 15, 19. Acts 3: 22, 23.

VI. The Three Witnesses of the Scene.—Vers. 4-8. 4. Then answered Peter: just as the heavenly visitors seemed about to depart (Luke). Peter answered, not to any spoken question, but to the circumstances, to the movements toward departure. And said unto Jesus: Luke says, “not knowing what he saith,” to which Mark adds, “for they became sore afraid.”—*Schaff*. Lord, it is good for us to be here: so far, Peter spoke the simple fact. The experience was good, and would make him a stronger, better, more useful man all his life long.

THE BLESSING OF THE TRANSFIGURATION EXPERIENCE. That experience which was good for Peter is good for us. We all need the highest and sweetest experiences of the love of Christ, to see him in his beauty and glory, to glance through the gates ajar, to feel the breath of heaven and hear the voice of God. (1) It widens the outlook, giving earthly things their truer place in life. (2) It gives a clearer view of the end to which we are working, of the state to which God would bring all men. (3) It helps us bear our burdens, overcome our temptations, do our Christian work. We are amid sin, but we have seen the glory of the Master able to conquer it; we dwell amid sorrows, but we know him who has power to transform them; we see the work to be done, but here is new inspiration and hope. Light, victory, glory, heaven, shine henceforth on all the dark earth.—*P*. If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles: or booths, made from the bushes on the mountain. Here is where Peter began to speak from his bewildered mind. The booths, like those at the Feast of Tabernacles, were for the abode of the three heavenly ones, to retain them lest they depart, as they seemed about to do.—*P*. It is too brief a converse, too transient a glimpse and foretaste of the heavenly glory. He will fain detain these august visitors. They shall remain there, and make it a constant paradise.—*Whedon*. It seemed to him that the hour for the long-looked-for reign had come. From the slopes of Hermon he would have had the laws of the new kingdom proclaimed, so that all men might recognize the true Messiah attended by the representatives of the Old Dispensation.—*Cambridge Bible for Schools*.

NOTE (1) that the disciples were not allowed to remain on the mount, nor did the heavenly visitants remain. The disciples were to take their heavenly experience with them down into the sinful, suffering world below.

NOTE (2) that the blessing was not lost because the experience did not continue. The transfiguration was a power, a comfort, a help all the rest of their lives. A deep experience in a Christian, a true revival in a church, is not lost because it does not continue in this form. It blesses all the remaining time, and one fails of his best usefulness unless he has had the transfiguration experience.

NOTE (3) that to retain the value of the experience it was necessary to go down from the mount, and use it in making the world better. It was by shining in the darkness that the light would retain its radiance. Sequestered joys, however blessed, lose their virtue, like the manna kept over contrary to the divine command. The church that would be a club for its own enjoyment, and would not live in the wicked, uncultured world, the coterie that would keep its culture to itself, always lose the blessing they seek to retain. People often desire to remain amid the ecstasies of religious feeling; but they will retain its blessing only as they go down from the mount and use their experience in transfiguring their daily burdens and cares, and attracting men to the cross of Christ.—*P*.

5. While he yet spake. Here was the answer to Peter's suggestion. A bright cloud: the symbol of the divine presence, the pavilion of the Most High. All earthly brightness is the shadow of his ineffable glory.—*P*. Overshadowed them: either the whole company or, as others think, only Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. And behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son. God now gives his testimony. The same voice which had once before been heard at the baptism, and which should salute

6. ¹And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7. And Jesus came and ²touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

8. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

9. And as they came down from the mountain, ³Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

10. And his disciples asked him, saying, ⁴Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

11. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and ⁵restore all things.

12. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but ⁶have done unto

And when the disciples heard 6 it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus 7 came and touched them and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And lifting up their eyes, they 8 saw no one, save Jesus only.

And as they were coming 9 down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen from the dead. And his disci- 10 ples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Eli- 11 jah must first come? And he answered and said, Elijah in- 12 deed cometh, and shall restore all things: but I say unto 13 you, that Elijah is come al- ready, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatso- ever they listed. Even so

¹ 2 Pet. 1: 18. ² Dan. 8: 18; 9: 21; 10: 10, 18. ³ Matt. 16: 20. Mark 8: 30; 9: 9. ⁴ Mal. 4: 5. Matt. 11: 14. Mark 9: 11. ⁵ Mal. 4: 6. Luke 1: 16, 17. Acts 3: 21. ⁶ Matt. 14: 3, 10.

him again as he stood on the threshold of his passion; thus, at the beginning, at the middle, and at the close of his ministry. — *Trench*. Such a confirmation of the great confession of Peter was never to be forgotten. Almost a generation later, the remembrance of this night is as vivid as ever (2 Pet. 1: 17). — *Geikie*. **Hear ye him**: he is worthy of your attention and obedience.

6. **They fell on their face**: in reverent awe and fear. **And were sore afraid**. *Sor*. is from the same Saxon root with *sorry*, and has in old writers the sense of heavy, harsh severe. — “*Pamela*,” in “*Golden Rule*.” The great manifestations of God’s power close at hand fill the soul, conscious of weakness and sin, with dread solemnity.

7. **Jesus came and touched them**. Act and words were both expressive of an almost brotherly tenderness. — *Ellicott*. **Be not afraid**. Only in Jesus can we draw nigh to God without dread.

8. **They saw no man**: the two heavenly visitants had passed away in the cloud. **Save Jesus only**: God’s son and representative on earth; their long-loved Master and Teacher. — Moments of spiritual ecstasy, like angel’s visits, are few and far between; but Jesus is always with us in our daily common life and work. — *Rev. Com*.

VII. **Conversation and Explanations**. — Vers. 9-13. 9. **Tell the vision** (the sight, the thing seen) **to no man, until the Son of man be risen**: because (1) they could not fully understand its meaning till then, so as to tell it aright, as to Jesus’ nature, his death, his resurrection, the future life. (2) Those to whom they told it could still less comprehend its full meaning, and would misunderstand and pervert it. — *P*. (3) Had they preached the Messiah now, they would hardly have held him forth as a dying Redeemer; and had they preached him as a glorious Messiah, superior to Moses and Elias, as set forth in his transfiguration, the Jewish authorities would have held them guilty of treason. — *Whedon*.

10. **His disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?** They knew that the scribes, in their capacity as interpreters of prophecy, were wont to say that Elijah must first come before their nation’s Messiah could appear. They said this on the strength of Mal. 3: 1 and 4: 5. — *Corvles*. What is the force of the *then*? What suggested the question? (1) They now accepted the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, but wanted to understand how this could be, since Elijah had not come, but was in heaven, as they now realized. (2) If this appearance of Elijah was the fulfilment of the prophecy, why should they not proclaim it, so as to prove him to be the Messiah, and why was the coming so secret and so short?

11. **Elias truly shall first come**: just as the scribes said. **And restore all things**: work a reformation; bring back the true basis and principles and life of the kingdom of God, which the Jews had perverted and turned aside. He began the reform of all things pertaining to the kingdom of God. — *P*.

12. **Elias is come already**: as they soon understood, in the person of John the Baptist, who came “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1: 17). He did for this genera-

him whatsoever they listed. Likewise ¹shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

13. ²Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

shall the Son of man also suffer of them. Then under-13 stood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

¹ Matt. 16: 21.

² Matt. 11: 14.

tion what Elijah had done for his. They knew him not: refers to the Jews, especially to the scribes (ver. 10). **Whatsoever they listed:** or "wished." List and lust were originally one word, meaning to desire or wish. — *Morison*. They persecuted the very person to whom the prophecy they interpreted pointed. — *Riddle*. **Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.** That the scribes did not recognize and accept John the Baptist as Elijah was no proof that Elijah had not come; neither would it any more be proof that Jesus was not the Messiah because the scribes set him at nought. — *P*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On Hermon, see *Land and Book*, new ed. 2: 327, 623; Dr. Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 609, gives a glowing account of the view from the top. Edersheim's *Life of Christ*, 11: 91, 538; Gunsaulus' *The Transfiguration of Christ*; Trench's *Studies in the Gospels*, p. 184. In Bishop Hall's *Contemplations*, there are two most quaint sermons on the transfiguration, preached before James I. Ruskin's *Frondees Agrestes*, pp. 133-137; Sears' *Foregleams*; N. P. Warren's *Parousia*; *Stems and Twigs*, 2: 33; Bertram's *Homiletic Cyclopedia*, p. 633. *Lesson Helps* for May 2, 1880, and June 4, 1882.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Jesus knows the trials, the discouragements, and the duties which are coming to his people, and takes means to prepare them for whatever is coming.

2. Only those who have served Christ faithfully in the valleys of daily duty, and have lived near to him, can climb with him the Mount of Transfiguration. Daily faithfulness is the ladder to heaven.

3. No one can realize what he loses by being only an ordinary Christian, and missing the transfiguration experiences.

4. There are heavenly experiences given occasionally to Christians, as a foretaste of their future glory and a glimpse of the spiritual realities ever about them.

5. Our richest and most heavenly experiences come in and through prayer.

6. There is a glory in the Bible and in Christ beyond our ordinary conception, and often veiled, but always there to those who can see.

7. Those higher experiences, times of revival, exaltation, Pentecostal seasons, though in form they pass away, yet bless and inspire all the subsequent life. They give a wider view, new knowledge, higher ideals, loftier motives, larger hopes. No one can do his best work, or come into his largest usefulness, without this experience.

8. We know how the human countenance is often lit up by joy, beautified by affection, or wonderfully transformed by the peace and blessedness realized in the hour of death.

9. Christians are nearest together in doctrine when nearest to Christ in heavenly experience. The best and highest Christians differ least in essentials. The churches become one on the Mount of Transfiguration. The differences in the light of our little lamps are all absorbed in the radiance of the sun.

10. We see the reality of the life beyond the grave.

11. We obtain glimpses of the glory that awaits us.

12. We have a hint of the *employments* of the redeemed. Two were sent to earth on an errand of helpfulness, — came to cheer the Son of God as he set out for his cross. May it not be that in some such service all the redeemed shall engage in glory?

13. We see the state to which God would bring all men, and are inspired with new zeal to bring men to such a Saviour and to such glory.

14. We shall know one another in the other world. Moses and Elijah were known by their names and work. — "We are not likely to know any less in heaven than on earth."

15. Peter, though he had but a glimpse of glory, yet he saith, "It is good to be here." But, oh! how infinitely good will it be to be in heaven! How shall we then be rapt up with glory when we shall be forever with the Lord! — *Archbishop Usher*.

16. We are not to seek to stay upon the Mount of Transfiguration, but must bring these experiences into daily life, to make us live better, to help us to do more good. The value of light is to irradiate darkness. The light that would shine only for itself must go out in darkness.

17. God's voice is still heard throughout all the world, testifying that Jesus Christ is his beloved Son. It is heard in the wonders of grace, in the triumphs of the Gospel, in the good it does in the world, in the experiences of Christians.

18. There are some truths which we cannot fully understand till other things have been made plain to us. "Tell no man the vision," till you comprehend it yourselves.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The Introduction and general plan given in the *Explanatory* will be effective in teaching this lesson, with the illustrations given below, used in their appropriate places.

Illustration. The well-known story of Raphael's last picture will be of interest to tell the children. He always loved to paint scenes from the Saviour's life: and his last work, on which he spent years of study, was upon the story of this lesson. It was scarcely finished when he died. While he was sick, he had the picture hung in his sight, that his constant thoughts might be upon his glorified Saviour. When he was dead, the picture was hung above his lifeless body, where for days crowds came to honor his wonderful genius, as they looked with reverence at the dead artist and his wonderful picture of the Transfiguration of Jesus. — *Faith Latimer.*

SUBJECT, — THE GLORY OF CHRIST REVEALED.

I. TO WHOM REVEALED (ver. 1). To the faithful three who had lived nearest to Jesus, and learned the most from him.

Illustrations. 1. One who has best trained his ear will hear sounds inaudible to others, and will find delight in music which brings no joy to the untrained.

2. One who has faithfully studied can read marvellous thoughts in a book in a foreign language, which brings no light to one who has not studied it, or studied it carelessly.

II. THE VISION OF CHRIST'S GLORY (ver. 2).

Illustrations. 1. Those who had seen Christ only in his human form were like those who had seen only the seeds of the rose or bulb of the lily, but had no vision of the blossoms which could grow out of them.

2. Imagine a palace beautifully lighted within, but with closed blinds and drawn curtains. Then imagine its appearance to one without when the blinds and doors are thrown open, and the brilliance within bursts forth from every opening.

III. HEAVENLY VISITANTS CONFIRM THE GLORY (vers. 3, 4).

Illustration. *The value of this experience.* Carlyle, speaking of the Reformation, says: "Are there in this nation enough of heroic men, enough to venture forward and to battle for God's truth versus the Devil's falsehood. Once risen into this divine white heat of temper, were it only for a season and not again, it is henceforth considerable through all its remaining history. Nations are benefited for ages by being thrown once into divine white heat in this manner. And no nation that has not had such divine paroxysms at any time is apt to come to much." So the transfiguration experiences help us all the rest of our lives. Revival heights bless us evermore; and when they have passed away, and we have come down into the valleys, the blessings have not left us. — *P.*

Illustration. *Make the experience a help in your work.* A recluse had made it his prayer that he might see Jesus in person. The vision came: the sight filled his room, and flooded the entire space with luminous shining. He fell on his knees. At that instant the clock tolled for noon, and he must go forth to feed the paupers as usual at the gate. Should he leave the chamber and lose the spectacle? He went and did his duty, and came back in tears, wondering whether he should ever dare to pray again, and whether his vision would ever return. He was comforted and amazed, as he entered his cell, to find the Great Light waiting for him yet: —

"Nay, wonder not?" the Vision said:
 "Because thou wentest forth, I stayed;
 Hadst thou remained to enjoy the sight,
 I would have taken instant flight!" — *C. S. Robinson.*

See the same story charmingly told by Longfellow in the *Legend Beautiful*.

IV. THE TESTIMONY OF GOD TO JESUS (vers. 5-8).

V. EXPLANATIONS (vers. 9-13).

LESSON VII.—FEBRUARY 12.

JESUS AND THE LITTLE ONES.—MATT. 18: 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*—MATT. 19: 14.

TIME.—Early autumn, A.D. 29. A few weeks after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Capernaum, a town near the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Mark 9: 33-50; Luke 9: 46-50.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—When Jesus and the three disciples had come down from the Mount of Transfiguration, they found the other nine disciples baffled in their attempts to cure a demoniac child brought to them, in Jesus' absence, by his father. Jesus restores the boy, and explains to his disciples that their failure arose from the weakness of their faith.

Then they probably cross the Jordan near its source, and slowly return from the north toward Capernaum, through Galilee. There Jesus again foretells his sufferings, death, and resurrection (Matt. 17: 22, 23).

On their arrival at Capernaum the assessors come to Peter for the temple tribute-money, or taxes. Peter, at Jesus' command, catches a fish, finds a piece of money in its mouth, and uses it for paying the tax. Our lesson for to-day begins soon after this in a house at Capernaum (17: 24-27).

1. At ¹the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, ^{In that hour came the dis-} saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? ^{ciples unto Jesus, saying,} ^{Who then is greatest in the}

¹ Mark 9: 33. Luke 9: 46; 22: 24.

EXPLANATORY.

I. A Discussion by the Way as to who should be the Greatest.—Mark 9: 33, 34. We learn from Mark (9: 34) that on their way home to Capernaum from the transfiguration scene the disciples had had a discussion or dispute among themselves, apart from Jesus, as to who should be greatest. It may have arisen (1) from the fact that three of their number had been selected by Jesus for his companions on the mount; (2) the keys had been given to Peter, and he was to be a foundation-stone of the kingdom (16: 18, 19); (3) Judas, as the treasurer, may have had special ambitions, as he thought of being chief of the treasury of the Messiah king; (4) we know that some time after this the mother of James and John came to Jesus, asking for her sons the place nearest the king (Matt. 20: 20, 21); (5) those who had received special favors may have usurped some authority, assumed a dictatorial spirit, which would naturally be resented by the others; (6) all this would be intensified by the feeling that the time would soon come when the Messiah would found his kingdom.—*P.*

II. The Appeal to Jesus for a Decision.—Ver. 1. At the same time: or, as in Rev. Ver., *in that hour*, when Peter had returned from the seaside, and had paid the sacred tribute (17: 27).—*G. W. Clark.* It was in the house (Mark 9: 33), perhaps Peter's (*Edersheim*), where Jesus had his home in Capernaum. The disciples were alone with Jesus (Mark 9: 35). Came the disciples unto Jesus. In Mark 9: 33, we are told that Jesus asked them what they had been discussing by the way. The guilty ones held their peace, for they were ashamed to tell him that it was "who should be greatest." Then some of the other disciples applied to Jesus for a decision, as recorded here. **Who (then) is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?** Their question was not, What elements of character make true greatness? who of us *is* greatest? but, Who of us shall occupy the highest place in your coming kingdom?—*Abbott.* They had as yet no other notion of the kingdom that was shortly to appear than that it would be a temporal one; that their Master was to become a powerful prince, with places, honors, wealth, at his command.—*Hanna.* This question grew out of the imperfection of their character, and a misunderstanding of the nature of the kingdom of heaven. The same spirit has wrought unnumbered evils in the church and in the world.—*P.*

III. The Decision.—Mark 9: 35. Jesus does not give them the answer they expected, pointing out the great ones, but lays down the principles of greatness in his king-

2. And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

3. And said, Verily I say unto you,¹ Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

kingdom of heaven? And he² called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say³ unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into

¹ Ps. 131: 2. Matt. 19: 14. Mark 10: 14. Luke 18: 16. 1 Cor. 14: 20. 1 Pet. 2: 2.

dom: *If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all*, simply because the desire to be first, self-seeking, is exactly opposite to the spirit which is the law of Christ's kingdom, the spirit of love, of self-denial, of helpfulness of others, of humility. Therefore the more any one has of the desire to be first, the less he has of Christ's kingdom. So that the desire to be first *makes* him last by the very nature of things. Despotism, self-seeking, ambition, ever make a man a slave, a servant of all. He is a slave to his ambition, to the whims and opinions of other people, to circumstances. — P.

On another occasion later on, Jesus gave them the other side of this truth. He showed them on this occasion that their way to greatness would make them least. Then he showed them the only true way to greatness: Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Matt. 20: 28, 29). He is the greatest, who claims the least for self, who is most unconscious of self, but does the most for his fellow-men. This is the verdict of all history. Only disinterested love can be great. Selfishness dims the crown and diminishes the throne of those who would otherwise be great. — P.

DISTINGUISH between the strong desire to improve, to have large usefulness, to grow in holiness and love, and the desire to have more honor and power than others. *Aut Cesar aut nullus*, "to be first or nothing," leads to crimes and wars. It was Milton's *Satan* who said, "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." "How like a mounting devil in the heart rules the unreined ambition." But Paul's desire was divine, when he "pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3: 13, 14). — P.

IV. **The Object Lesson; a Little Child.** — Vers. 2-5. 2. And Jesus called a little child to him. Evidently, from the language employed, it was a young child; evidently from his *calling* it, not a mere infant. — *Abbott*. And set him in the midst of them: a striking illustration and an incidental indorsement of object-teaching in morals. — *Abbott*. The child was a living illustration, a living parable.

3. And said, after he had taken the child up in his arms (Mark), expressing in act of loving caress the "receiving" spoken of in ver. 5. **Except ye be converted.** The Greek student should observe that the tense here is not the future, but the aorist, and represents neither an act completed in the past time — *i.e.*, it is not equivalent to, *Except ye had been converted*, — nor one to be effected in the future, *Except ye shall be converted*, but one *past and continuing*, *Except ye be continually* turned back from this spirit of self-seeking, and *continually* take on the spirit of a little child. — *Abbott*.

The word here rendered *converted*, means "turned about so as to face in the other direction." It always signifies a radical and complete change in method, spirit, or course. Here it is, Unless you be turned entirely away from this habit of self-seeking, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, much less be greatest in it. — *Abbott*. Return, as the context shows, from this path of ambition to childlike *humility*: not implying that they had never been converted. Regeneration (like natural birth) cannot be repeated; but conversion, or repentance, which is the act of man, should follow every fall. The wider application is to the absolute necessity of conversion (turning ourselves to God) in entering the kingdom of heaven (John 3: 5). — *Rev. Com.*

THE CHILDLIKE SPIRIT. And become as little children: not sinless, for no children are sinless. They all need to be saved from being lost, as we see a little further on (vers. 11, 14). And if none but the sinless could enter the kingdom of heaven, that kingdom, on earth, would be empty. The meaning is, You must have those qualities which are characteristic of childhood, which make the ideal childhood. As Dr. Robinson puts it, "What you would have your child be to you, that be yourself to God." These qualities are: 1. humility; 2. freedom from ambition, rivalry, or jealousy; 3. tender and gracious affection; 4. perfect trust; 5. obedience; 6. a teachable spirit; 7. unworldliness; 8. indifference to the distinctions of rank and wealth. — P. For such a little child is free from pride, and the mad desire of glory and envy and contentiousness and all such passions, and having many virtues, — simplicity, humility, unworldliness, — prides itself on none of them; having a

4. ¹Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5. And ²whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

6. ³But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

the kingdom of heaven. Who-
soever therefore shall humble
himself as this little child, the
same is the greatest in the
kingdom of heaven. And
whoso shall receive one such
little child in my name re-
ceiveth me: but whoso shall
cause one of these little ones
which believe on me to stum-
ble, it is profitable for him
that a great millstone should
be hanged about his neck, and
that he should be sunk in the

¹ Matt. 20: 27; 23: 11.² Matt. 10: 42. Luke 9: 48.³ Mark 9: 42. Luke 17: 1, 2.

twofold severity of goodness,—to have these things and not be puffed up about them.—*Chrysostom.* Shall not enter: not only could not be first, as they were seeking to be, but could not even enter the kingdom, and have any part in it. Why? Because the kingdom of heaven is a spiritual kingdom; and the self-seeking spirit is diametrically opposed to its spirit. The childlike spirit is the only gate to that kingdom.—*P.*

4. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself (so as to be) as this little child. This interprets the preceding verse, and points out the respect in which we are to become as little children; and it is in turn further interpreted by the addition in Luke 9: 48, *He that is least among you all, i.e.,* who is willing to be least in rank and dignity, *the same shall be great.* Humility is not thinking meanly of one's self, but being willing, even with great powers, to take a lowly office and perform seemingly menial and insignificant and not honored service. The first is not characteristic of childhood, the latter is. Christ's own example is the best interpretation of his teaching (John 13: 3-5; 12: 15; Phil. 2: 5-8).—*Abbott.*

5. Whoso shall receive: welcome, show kindness to.—*Carr.* Receive into spiritual fellowship.—*Schaff.* Into his home and into his heart.—*Morison.* This receiving is the consequence and evidence of humility.—*Schaff.* One such little child: referring both to children in years, and to those of a childlike spirit; all who are apparently small, humble, needing instruction. In my name: for my sake, from love to me, from sympathy with Jesus' spirit and love. Receiveth me: (1) whosoever appreciates childlike lowliness, *when he meets it in others,* appreciates Christianity and Christ. (2) Has taken into his heart my spirit, the characteristics which I love and which make me what I am. (3) He shall be accepted as having done me a favor in my representative. The act proves that he loves me, and this is the way in which he can express his feelings.—*P.*

V. A Question in Point.—Mark 9: 38-41. At this juncture John remembers a recent occurrence, and relates it for Jesus' approval. Probably during their recent tour of Galilee, two and two (Matt. 10: 1; Mark 6: 7, 30), they had met a stranger casting out devils in Jesus' name, and they forbade him because he did not follow them. The point was: (1) Here was a man doing the work of a disciple in the kingdom, and yet he had not enough of the Christlike spirit to follow Jesus, and especially his chosen twelve. How could that be consistent with what Jesus had been saying? (2) John himself not only would receive Jesus, but would refuse to receive any who would not openly follow Jesus.

In reality, John unconsciously was exhibiting an intolerant and unchildlike spirit. Jesus said "Forbid him not." For he must have my spirit in order to do those works. Then follows the discourse contained in the next four verses of the lesson.

VI. Putting Stumbling-blocks in the Way of Others.—Vers. 6, 7. 6. Who-so shall offend: cause to stumble, or fall into sin. One of these little ones that believe in me: the weakest and feeblest of God's flock, not merely the *children*, but the little ones, in intellectual and spiritual power and in ecclesiastical position and earthly honor.—*Abbott.* The child yet nestling in his arms, and furnishing the text for his remarks.—*Farrar.*

OFFENDING THE LITTLE ONES. Our Lord does not mean "vexing them," "making them angry," or "ill-using them"; but "tempting or leading them into evil." The "little ones" are the more ignorant and simple-minded, ready to believe and do what others tell them. In school, this temptation is to idleness, to extravagance, and the breach of school regulations. It comes through example, reproaches, and laughter. That boy has gone a good way in the devil's service who will dare to influence another against his father and mother.—*Dr. Arnold's Rugby School Sermons.* There are many other ways, such as tempting to lie, to drink intoxicating drinks, suggesting religious doubts, breaking down

7. Woe unto the world because of offences! ¹for it must needs be that offences come; but ²woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

8. ³Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

9. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

depth of the sea. Woe unto 7
the world because of occasions
of stumbling! for it must needs
be that the occasions come;
but woe to that man through
whom the occasion cometh!
And if thy hand or thy foot 8
cause thee to stumble, cut it
off, and cast it from thee: it is
good for thee to enter into life
maimed or halt, rather than
having two hands or two feet
to be cast into the eternal fire.
And if thine eye cause thee 9
to stumble, pluck it out, and
cast it from thee: it is good
for thee to enter into life with
one eye, rather than having
two eyes to be cast into the

¹ Luke 17: 1. ¹ Cor. 11: 19. ² Matt. 26: 24. ³ Matt. 5: 29, 30. Mark 9: 43, 45.

religious habits, sneering at strictness of Sabbath-keeping and obedience to parents. **It were better for him that a millstone.** The word for "millstone" indicates the larger stone mill, in working which an ass was commonly employed, as distinguished from the smaller handmill of Luke 17: 35. **Were hanged about his neck,** etc. We are taken, in imagination, into the presence of a certain dreadful scene. We see a millstone attached to a man's neck. The fastening, passing through the central perforation of the stone, is made secure. It is a sad sight. Yet, turning from another scene, we say "This *is* better." It is better than that the same man should act the part of a seducer, and entrap a childlike follower of Jesus. — *Morison*. **And were cast into the sea:** which was within sight. It is better to die a thousand deaths than to lead another into sin, and thus to *murder his soul*. The offender is represented as gaining a millstone, but by that gain losing his life. — *P.*

7. **Woe unto the world:** not a wish, but a statement of the fact. **Because of offences:** because there are so many stumbling-blocks and temptations to evil placed in men's way by the worldly spirit. **For it must be that offences come:** it is unavoidable in this sinful world that those who would serve Christ should be tempted. They cannot live in the world and not meet all manner of temptations and hindrances. **But woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh:** who is guilty of this most awful of sins, — the leading of others into sin. He that sins himself is weak, but he that leads others into sin is devilish. It is a fiend's business.

VII. **Removing Stumbling-blocks from our Own Way.** — Vers. 8, 9. 8. **If thy hand or thy foot offend thee** (lead thee into sin), **cut them off.** The meaning is, if an object dear as the right eye and useful as the right hand, stands between you and your progress to heaven and your complete surrender to Christ, that object, however dear, you are to part with. — *Cumming*. **Hand:** the temptation to *do* what is wrong, — forgery, stealing, murder. **Foot:** *going* into forbidden ways. **Halt:** or *lame* from the loss of a foot. **Maimed:** from the loss of a hand. **Eye:** coveting, lusting. Hand, foot, and eye are the most valuable of our members, and often used proverbially to denote anything peculiarly dear and valuable; the dearest objects of our desires, the honors, possessions, or enjoyments we most prize. — *Clark*. It does not mean that if these things merely tempt us; but if they cause us to fall into sin, if we are unable to battle with and overcome the temptation. **Better . . . to enter into life halt . . . maimed, . . . with one eye:** not that any can be literally such in heaven; but it is better to have eternal life here, to be a true Christian, and to enter into heaven "*without enjoying* the things that caused us to sin, than to enjoy them *here* and then be lost." **Cast into (the) everlasting fire:** that prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25: 41). Fire is the symbol of the most terrible torment; and nothing can put it out. The consequences of sin are eternal.

9. **Hell fire:** the hell, or Gehenna of fire. The literal Gehenna was a valley to the south of Jerusalem, naturally "pleasant," as Milton describes it; but, having become the scene of the worship of Molech, "the abomination of the children of Ammon" (1 Kings 11: 7), its associations became frightful. It would appear also that it had become in later times a place of refuse where carcases and other abominations were thrown. Altogether, the uses to which the place had been put made it a graphic symbol for the refuse-place of the universe. — *Morison*. Having been the scene of such pollution, wickedness, and torment, it became a fit emblem of everlasting punishment. — *Dr. Barclay*, "City of the Great King," p. 90.

10. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven ¹their angels do always ²behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

11. ³For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

12. ⁴How think ye? if a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

hell of fire. See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. How think ye? if any man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go unto the mountains, and seek that

¹ Ps. 34: 7. Zech. 13: 7. Heb. 1: 14. ² Esth. 1: 14. Luke 1: 19. John 3: 17. ⁴ Luke 15: 4.

³ Luke 9: 56; 19: 10.

This terrible warning comes from the most loving heart in the universe. It is love, not hate, that points out the danger of sin. Love's hand rings the warning fire-bell. Love lights the beacon to keep men from being wrecked. He that refuses or neglects to warn is the one who is cruel. — *P.*

VIII. **The Desire of Christ that Men be saved.** — Vers. 10-14. 10. **Take heed:** Jesus now applies to the treatment of the "little ones" of whom he had before been speaking the warnings he had just given. **That ye despise not,** look down upon, feel contempt or indifference towards. **These little ones,** the children, the childlike believers, the unnoticed, insignificant, lowly. The greater one's needs and weakness, the more sure he is of the notice of Christ. His very weakness is the argument that should encourage him to go to his Saviour. — *P.* **In heaven their angels: their angels in heaven,** who are their ministering spirits (Heb. 1: 14). In the Old Testament angels are represented as guardians of God's people and nations (Ps. 34: 7; Dan. 10: 13, 20, 21); in the New, they are more particularly represented as guardians of individual believers. Our Saviour only reveals here the general fact that his followers have their angels, who are their attendants and guardians. — *G. W. Clark.* **Do always behold the face of my Father:** i.e., children are under the care of the highest order of angels, of those that stand continually in the presence of God (*Cook*) and have most direct and immediate access to him.

THE CHURCH AND THE CHILDREN. If Christ so cares for the young, the childlike, the unnoticed, if the highest angels guard them with loving care, then the church of Christ should give its most loving attention, its best gifts, its most earnest labors, to the same classes. That church is most blessed which does this. For (1) it brings its members into closest harmony with Christ and his mission. (2) Its teachings, adapted to these classes, will be best for the hearts of all. A theology, so plain and simple and Biblical, so free from metaphysical speculations that a child can understand and love it, is the best theology for the daily life of all. (3) It is better to give than to receive. — *P.*

11. (This verse is omitted from the Rev. Ver. because it is not in the oldest MSS. But it is in Luke 19: 10, and expresses divine truth.) **For:** here is another reason for not despising the little ones. **The Son of man is come to save.** The purpose and object of the Son of man, — his leaving heaven, his advent on earth, his teaching, his miracles, his death, — were to save men, — save them from sin; save them from their ignorance, darkness, debasement; save them from the consequences of their sin. **That which was lost:** the lost race of men. Men are lost, because they are away from Father and home, and do not know the way back; because they are exposed to danger and death, and are unable to rescue themselves. — *P.*

A PARABLE. 12. **If a man have a hundred sheep and one of them be gone astray.** This parable is given more fully in Luke 15: 3-7. The lost sheep is a type of the sinner going away from a loving shepherd, and the green pastures and still waters he provides, wandering at its own will after forbidden delights, till it is lost in the wilderness of sin, and surrounded by a thousand dangers; unable to find the way back, yet sure to perish unless it does. — *P.* **Doth he not leave the ninety and nine:** in a place of safety? The angels in heaven do not need the Saviour's presence there, glorious as it is, so much as this lost world needs him. **And goeth:** for he knows every sheep by name; knows which one is lost. **Into the mountains:** places hard and dangerous, expressing the contrast between Jesus' life on earth and his home in heaven. **And seeketh that which is gone astray:** seeks till he finds it, says Luke. Jesus uses every means by which to bring back his lost sheep.

13. And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

14. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

which goeth astray? And if ¹³ so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth over it more than over the ninety and nine which have not gone astray. Even so it is ¹⁴ not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

Some have strongly felt the objection to the Gospel, that it is not probable that the Son of the infinite God would leave all the measureless stars without redemption, and come to this little world which is but a mote in the sunbeam compared with other worlds, and here become man and die for us, the almost invisible atoms in this obscure corner of the universe. But here the enigma is solved. Wherever the lost are, there he must go for them. The hearts of all the family go after the lost one. — *P.*

13. **He rejoiceth more of that sheep.** This sheep is of no more value than the others, but its rescue opens the fountains of joy. And he calls all to rejoice with him. Heaven is full of joy at the repentant sinner (Luke), because he is saved from measureless woe and unfathomed depths of sin to blessedness and holiness beyond the heart to conceive.

14. **It is not the will of your Father . . . that one of these little ones should perish:** these little ones, as above: weak, humble, believers. God will not that a single one of them should perish,—reach the final state of the lost. "Little ones" cannot refer to all mankind; here, as throughout, it includes children. It warrants the belief that children, dying in childhood, are *all saved*. The parable shows that it cannot be on the ground of their innocence, but because the Son of man came to save them. — *Rev. Com.* But it is also true that Jesus came to save *all* the lost; seeks to save them. God has done everything for their salvation which wisdom and love can do. And those who are lost are lost because they refuse to be saved. They will not come to Jesus. They resist every effort divine love can make to redeem them. — *P.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

C. R. Robinson's *Church Work*, "The Childlike Spirit; Arnold's *Rugby Sermons*, vol. ii., chap. 8, on ver. 6, and vol. iii., chap. 23, on ver. 10; on vers. 1-4, "The Childlike Spirit," see Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, vol. v., chap. on *Peace*; and the poem of Rev. Theodore Monod, in *Gospel Hymns*, No. 3, "None of Self and all of Thee"; on the parable of the lost sheep, see Wm. M. Taylor's *The Lost found*, and his *Parables of our Saviour*; also Arnot, Guthrie, Cummings, and Trench, on *The Parables*; for illustrations, see *Seeds and Sheaves*, "Mr. Roger's Dream"; and *The Snowflake Album* of the Am. Tract Soc., "Beautiful Snow."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Ver. 1. One of the greatest dangers of the church is the desire of some to be greater than others; to have more honor, influence, wealth, power.

2. This desire excites contentions and quarrels, awakes envy, injures the character, tempts to wrong conduct, is selfish, and entirely contrary to the spirit of Christ.

3. He only is truly great who loves his fellow-men, and, forgetting self, desires to do the most good to the most people.

4. Vers. 2-4. Note the love of Jesus for little children (vers. 1, 6, 10, and chap. 19: 13-15).

5. Teachers will do well if they learn from Jesus to use object lessons and illustrations in their teaching.

6. A teachable, humble, unambitious, loving spirit is necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven.

7. The same spirit is also the door to the kingdom of science and learning.

8. Ver. 5. The true way to receive Christ is to receive into our hearts, for Christ's sake, those who need the hospitality of our sympathies, as the way to serve Christ is by serving the needy and suffering (Matt. 25: 31-40). — *Abbott*.

9. Vers. 6, 7. The greatest of all wrongs is to lead the innocent, the weak, the trusting, into sin.

10. Vers. 8, 9. No outward good can compensate for the loss of holiness and eternal life.

11. The punishment of the wicked is terrible and endless.

12. Jesus warns men of their danger, because he loves them. It is cruelty, not love, which denies the punishment of sin, or lessens the sense of its danger.

13. Ver. 10. All the good in heaven and on earth are for the children, for the weak, the obscure.

14. The true church ever makes the children her dearest care; builds the edifices, arranges the services, gives her best members for the best care and training of the little ones.

15. The true church always gives itself to the work of saving and helping the weak, the unfortunate, the unnoticed; seeks first, not the great, but the needy.

16. In our carelessness about sin and God's service, we stand, as it were, alone in creation; while higher beings view with interest every one who is striving to do God's will, and rejoice over every soul gained over from the cause of the evil to the cause of the good.

—*Dr. Arnold.*

17. Vers. 11-14. Sinners are like lost sheep, gone astray of their own choice, leaving a good home, unable to find their way back, exposed to multitudes of dangers.

18. We know something of the love of Christ by what he endured to bring us home.

19. God knows each of his sheep by name. He *misses* us if we stray away.

20. God desires that all men be saved, for he has prepared the way for all, invited all, sends his Spirit upon all, gives his Son for all.

21. But those who refuse to go back with the good shepherd to the fold, who *will* not come that they might have life, must perish.

22. How earnest we should be to be saved and to save others, since God regards our salvation as so important.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

A brief glance at the last lesson, and a tracing of the intervening history, will make a sufficient introduction. Have the *Parallel Accounts* before you.

SUBJECT, — ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

I. THEY ENTER WHO HAVE THE CHILDLIKE SPIRIT (vers. 1-5). The discussion by the way. The questioning at home. The object lesson of the little child. Practical teachings.

Illustration. Dr. Lange refers to the celebrated John Charlier Gerson, who was chancellor of the university of Paris and the theological leader of the reformatory councils of Pisa (1409) and Constance (1415). After taking a prominent part in all the great questions of his age, he retired to a convent at Lyons, and found his chief delight in the instruction of little children. As he felt the approach of death, he called once more the children that they might pray with him: Lord have mercy, have mercy upon thy poor servant! He appears greater in his humility than when he swayed by his eloquence the council of bishops. He died, A.D. 1429, 66 years old. — *Philip Schaff.*

Illustration. In the old fable which the Hebrews used to teach their children about the fallen angels, they said that the angels of knowledge, proud and wilful, were cast down hopelessly into hell; but the angels of love, humble and tearful, crept back once more into the blessed light, and were welcomed home. — *C. S. Robinson.*

Illustrate also by Leigh Hunt's *Abou Ben Adhem*, where the name of him who loved his fellow-men was written above all the rest.

II. HINDERING OTHERS FROM ENTERING THE KINGDOM (vers. 6, 7). Each teacher should point out the ways in which his own class are most likely to be guilty of this terrible sin.

III. PUTTING AWAY THAT WHICH HINDERS US (vers. 8, 9). Find out the things which are occasions of stumbling to those you teach.

Illustration. The story of Archbishop Cranmer, having recanted to save his life, afterwards stood for the truth and was burned as a martyr; while at the stake he held out his hand in the flames, saying, "This hand has offended; this unworthy hand!"

IV. CHILDREN AND THE KINGDOM (ver. 10). How much Jesus cared for children can be seen in the teachings of this lesson (comp. 19: 13-15). What is your church doing for the children? How do your class or school treat the weak, the unfortunate, the little ones?

V. WHAT GOD DOES TO BRING MEN INTO THE KINGDOM (vers. 11-14). Our desire should be like God's in this seeking for the lost. Here is a mark of the true Christian. If God considers it worth while to do so much to save us, how earnest we should be to be saved, and to save others.

Illustration. Reading the hymn "The Ninety and Nine" will touch many hearts.

Illustration. One evening in 1861, as General Garibaldi was going home, he met a Sardinian shepherd lamenting the loss of a lamb out of his flock. Garibaldi at once turned to his staff, and announced his intention of scouring the mountain in search of the lamb. A grand expedition was organized. Lanterns were brought, and old officers of many a campaign started off full of zeal to hunt the fugitive. But no lamb was found, and the soldiers were ordered to their beds. The next morning Garibaldi's attendant found him in bed fast asleep. The attendant waked him. The general rubbed his eyes, and so did the attendant, when he saw the old warrior take from under the covering the lost lamb, and bid him convey it to the shepherd. The general had kept up the search through the night until he had found it. Even so doth the Good Shepherd go in search of his lost sheep until he finds them. — *Sunday-School Times*.

LESSON VIII. — FEBRUARY 19.

A LESSON ON FORGIVENESS. — MATT. 18:21-35.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* — MATT. 6:12.

TIME. — Autumn, A.D. 29. About the time of the last lesson. Before the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2), which occurred that year, Oct. 11.

PLACE. — Capernaum, in Galilee. The place of the last lesson.

RECORDED only in Matthew.

JESUS. — Nearly 33 years old. About six months before his crucifixion.

INTRODUCTION.

This lesson follows close upon the last in thought, and may have been spoken at the same time. At least, Peter's question, and the parable Jesus spoke in reply, were suggested by what had been taught previously.

21. Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? ¹ till seven times?

Then came Peter, and said 21 to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven

¹ Luke 17:4.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **The Teaching which led to Peter's Question.** — Vers. 15-18. Jesus, as we saw in our last lesson, had been warning his disciples against *inflicting* wrong on others. He then proceeds to tell them how to treat those from whom they had *received* injuries. There are three steps, characterized by remarkable wisdom. (1) First, an effort is to be made to keep the matter private, — the very thing which is so commonly not done, — and thus to settle the difficulty by the two parties alone. The *injured* person is to make the first move, and go alone to the one who had injured him. "It is," says Morison, "the *sin* of our brother that is to excite solicitude, and not *our suffering* in consequence of it." The object is not to denounce, but to gain our brother; to save him from sin and ill-feeling; to gain him as a friend and brother. The going to him must, of course, be in a loving, forgiving, humble spirit. (2) If this measure fails, then one or two are to be informed, and taken with us to visit our brother. The object of this is that the facts may be seen from all sides, that the advice may be impartial, and the influence to do right be strong. (3) If this fails, but not till then, the matter may be made public, and the whole church may bring their united wisdom and influence to bear in the same spirit of love and justice.

If all these measures fail, then "the individual Christian is justified in ceasing to maintain friendly and personal relations with one who, after this triple endeavor, refuses to live in friendly relations with him." And the decision will be accepted and ratified in heaven.

This teaching was contrary to the natural impulses of the heart; contrary to the prevailing worldly ideas of what was manly; contrary to the teachings of the scribes.

II. **Peter's Question about forgiving Injuries.** — Vers. 21-22. 21. Then Peter said: after revolving in his mind the above teaching. Very possibly he may have

22. Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; ¹ but, Until seventy times seven.

23. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

times? Jesus saith unto him, 22 I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is 23 the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would make a reckoning with

¹ Matt. 6: 14. Mark 11: 25. Col. 3: 13.

had some personal experience in the matter, which may have led Jesus to utter this teaching at this time, and have led Peter to desire more light and some limitation. **Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?** In the recent dispute, Peter had probably been an object of special envy, and his forwardness in continually answering for all the rest would likely be cast up to him, — and if so, probably by Judas, — notwithstanding his Master's commendations. And as such insinuations were perhaps made once and again, he wished to know how often and how long he was to stand it. — *J., F. and B.* **Till seven times?** Or, as Luther gives it freely, *Is seven times sufficient?* Peter had begun to see farther than the rabbis. He doubles the numerical amount that had been generally fixed upon, "supposing," says Chrysostom, "that he was proposing something great." "He thought," says Lightfoot, "that he had measured out, by these words, a large charity, being, in a manner, double to that which was prescribed in the schools." — *Morison.*

22. I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. It is doubtful whether the original means 490 or 77 (seventy times seven, or seventy times and seven). But in either case it is a symbolical expression for never-ending forgiveness. Love is not to be limited by the multiplication table. — *Schaff.*

THE LAW OF FORGIVENESS FOR PERSONAL INJURIES. 1. Always, and under all circumstances, we must feel and show a forgiving spirit, and never the spirit of revenge. 2. The one who is injured must make the first advances, because he can do it more easily, and more hopefully than the injurer can. He must go in a loving, helpful spirit. He has no right to stand on his dignity and wait till the other comes to him. 3. "This duty does not imply that we are to take no notice whatever of the wrong that has been done to us." — *Taylor.* "Parallel with forgiveness there must be faithfulness. Faithfulness to the evil-doer and to the community comes in here to modify, not the nature, but the outward form, of forgiving. . . . There is no virtue in simply permitting a man to wrong you as often as he chooses, forgiving him and doing nothing more." — *Arnot.* 4. Christ's saying, in a parallel instance, interprets this rule of forgiveness. "If he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day **TURN AGAIN TO THEE**, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" (Luke 17: 3, 4). 5. If we cannot lead our brother to repentance, then he becomes to us "as a heathen man and a publican." But our work is not done on that account. He cannot, in that state, be an intimate friend, but we must love him as an enemy, even if we cannot live with him as a friend. God's word through Paul must be applied, — "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12: 20, 21). 6. The object is to remove sin from the world; to keep all wrong feelings from our own hearts, and save our brother from sin.

III. The Doctrine of Forgiveness illustrated by a Parable. — Vers. 23-35. **SCENE I.** (vers. 23-27). **23. Therefore:** in order that thereby we may learn the duty of absolute, not limited, forgiveness. — *Ederheim.* **A certain king, which would take account of his servants.** The picture is drawn from an Oriental court. The provincial governors, farmers of taxes, and other high officials are summoned before a despotic sovereign to give an account of their administration. — *Cambridge Bible.* That the servants must be officers and not bond-servants, is clear from the amount of the debt, and from the fact that the guilty one was to be sold into slavery.

THE KING, of course, represents God himself.

THE SERVANTS, or officers, are all to whom God had committed great blessings and opportunities and high trusts, — as the Gospel, the word of God, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, a clear sense of duty, a conscience, the Holy Spirit, talents, wealth, influence, everything by which they can serve God, help men, and grow into holy character. — *P.*

THE RECKONING does not answer to the last judgment, for after that there is no opportunity for the condemned to exercise or abstain from mercy to his fellows. Arnot gives the true interpretation well: "So the King Eternal, in various ways and at various periods, takes account of men, as by a commercial crisis, a personal affliction, a revival," or, let me

24. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

25. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him¹ to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

his servants. And when he²⁴ had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not²⁵ wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The ser-²⁶ vant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the²⁷ lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him

¹ 2 Kings 4: 1. Neh. 5: 8.

add, those heart-searchings that come without explicable cause on almost all men at some period in their life. — *Abbott*.

24. And when he had begun: with one foremost among his servants. — *Schaff*. One was brought unto him: unwillingly. Such a debtor could not come of his own accord. Which owed him ten thousand talents. A talent was a weight, not a coin. Hence a talent of gold would naturally be worth about 16 times as much as a talent of silver. The Greek (Attic) talent of silver was worth 6000 drachmæ (denarii, the pence referred to later in the parable). The drachmæ is variously estimated, but may be safely regarded as worth about 15 cents of our money. A talent would then be worth \$900, and 10,000 talents \$9,000,000. Others, by giving a slightly higher value to the drachma or penny, reckon a larger amount, as Edersheim, \$11,225,000, and Schaff, \$12,187,500. If the Hebrew talent was meant, the amount would be \$15,000,000 or upwards. The amount given signifies an enormous debt, utterly impossible of payment.

THE DEBT OF SIN. The immense debt of this guilty officer "represents the magnitude of the debt which the sinner owes to God, and the hopelessness of ever paying it." Sins are compared to debts, because they represent all that duty and love which we owe to God, but have never by our past lives paid; all that in which we have come short of the glory of God. — *Abbott*. We can obtain some idea of the greatness of our debt of sin, (1) by remembering God's relation to us, as our Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, in whom we live and move and have our being. (2) By remembering his infinite goodness toward us. All our sins have been against love itself. (3) By measuring ourselves by his perfect law, and his holy character. (4) By our countless number of sins and failures. (5) By recognizing that, more than the outward acts, we have come short in love, in gratitude, in the spirit and motive of our lives. (6) One sin is high as heaven, for it strikes at the nature and the throne of God; deep as hell, long as eternity, for its consequences have no end. Now multiply this sin by the number of sins you have committed, by the number of hours you have not loved God, and you will form some idea of the greatness of your debt of sin. (7) We cannot pay this debt. No bitter tears of repentance, no acts of righteousness, can take away the sin.

"Could my zeal no respite know, Could my tears forever flow,	All for sin could not atone: Thou must save, and thou alone." — <i>P.</i>
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25. But forasmuch as he had not to pay. He owned the debt, but he could not pay it. He had had the money, but wasted it like the prodigal son in riotous living. So we need not have been sinners. His lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, etc. This is simply a historical trait, introducing what in analogous circumstances might happen in real life, in order to point the lesson, that a man's strict desert before God is utter, hopeless, and eternal ruin and loss. — *Edersheim*.

26. Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. This describes with singular aptness the first natural impulse of one who is roused to a sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. He will try to balance the account as by a series of instalments; he will score righteous acts in the future as a set-off against the transgressions of the past. In theological language, he seeks to be "justified by works." — *Handy Com*.

27. The lord of that servant was moved with compassion. Expressing the infinite pity and mercy of God toward sinners. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Beyond conception is that compassion which leads the infinite and eternal

28. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him a hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31. So when his fellow servants saw what was done,

the debt. But that servant²⁸ went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence: and he laid hold on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his²⁹ fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not: so but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. So when his³¹ fellow-servants saw what was

God to do so much for such weak, unworthy creatures as we are. **Loosed him.** Set him at liberty from the bonds and prison guard, and the slavery just inflicted upon him. **And forgave him the debt.** This was more than he had dared to ask for, and yet was necessary to a full pardon, for he could never pay the debt.

THE DIVINE FORGIVENESS. 1. It originates in the divine love and compassion. Jesus did not come to make God love us, but to express God's love. 2. The divine forgiveness is given in Jesus Christ in such a way as to remove the debt, to save from the sin itself. The very method of salvation by Jesus, through forgiveness and faith, implants love and righteousness in the heart. 3. Forgiveness freely offered to all would increase sin, and not take it away, except for the atonement of Jesus Christ. The glory of the atonement is, that while it saves the sinner, it by the same means tends to lead the world to repentance and righteousness. 4. Forgiveness does not merely take away the punishment of sin; it receives us back into the love and favor of God, into his family and home. 5. Forgiveness does not remove the *fact* that we have sinned, but does remove the curse of sin. We have seen a piece of black coal by the roadside so reflecting the rays of the sun that we could not see its blackness, but only the glory of the rays. Thus in heaven God's love and wisdom will be so shown in saving sinners, that men and angels will forget the sin in the radiance of redeeming love (Ps. 103: 12, 13; Ps. 130; Isa. 1: 18; 55: 7; Rom. 3: 25, 26; 2 Cor. 5: 21; Col. 1: 14; 1 John 1: 9).—*P.*

SCENE II. (vers. 28-30). **28. The same servant went out.** He is said to go out, because in the actual presence of his lord he could scarcely have ventured on the outrage which follows.—*Trench.* The moment of close dealing between God and the soul has passed. The man goes out from that solemn and searching communion. He has not been converted; he has only been frightened.—*Arnot.* **And found.** He searches for the man who had wronged him. **One of his fellow servants which owed him.** By this is meant the debt of man to man, offences which men are bound to forgive one another.—*Prof. Carr.* **A hundred pence.** Roman denarii worth about 15 cents each, one 600th part of the Greek talent. So that this debt was only one 600,000th part of the debt which his lord had just forgiven him. So small are the sins of man against us compared with our sins against God.—*P.* "Though thou continually pardon thy neighbor absolutely for all his sins, as a drop of water to an endless sea, so much, or rather much more, doth thy love to man come short in comparison with the boundless goodness of God, of which thou standest in need."—*Chrysostom.* **Took him by the throat.** How savage the spirit. **Pay me that thou owest.** An imperative, haughty demand. "Such is man, so harsh and hard, when he walks otherwise than in a constant sense of forgiveness received from God. Ignorance or forgetfulness of his own guilt makes him harsh, unforgiving, and cruel to others."—*Trench.*

29. Fell down at his feet . . . I will pay thee all. The very act and words which he himself had so lately uttered. And this fellow-servant could pay in time, for it was only about three months' wages that he owed, while he himself could never have paid his debt.

30. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison. He had many reasons in his own mind, as (1) that the man deserved the punishment; (2) it was his own fault that he was in debt; (3) it was not good for the community that such men go unpunished. But not one of these would he want applied to himself. This creditor's sin we repeat when we hold resentment against an offender until he makes atonement and reparation.—*Abbott.* Whatever be the nature of the offence, patience and forbearance at once encourage and enable the offender to make restitution. Harshness shuts him up as in the prison of a sullen defiance.—*Handy Com.*

SCENE III. (vers. 31-35). **31. So when his fellow servants saw what was done,**

they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me :

33. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee ?

34. And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto ³² him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldest not ³³ thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his ³⁴ lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. So shall also my heavenly ³⁵ Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

they were very sorry. Sorrow, rather than anger, is the mood of the true disciple of Christ as he witnesses the sins against love. — *Ellicott*. And came and told their lord all. The first resort of the Christian against oppression is prayer (Ex. 3:7; James 5:4). — *Abbott*.

32. O thou wicked servant, etc. Before bringing down his vengeance upon him, he calmly points out to him how shamefully unreasonable and heartless his conduct was, which would give the punishment inflicted on him a double sting. — *J., F. and B.*

33. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant? Every reason why he should receive mercy was an argument why he should grant mercy. By doing as he had done he had outraged love, and denied the very reasons for which he had been forgiven. His action showed that he was not in a condition where mercy would do him good. Love had hardened, not melted his heart.

34. And his lord was wroth: angry, indignant, and justly so at such misconduct. Delivered him to the tormentors. Not simply "jailers," but those who (among the ancient Romans) sought by legal tortures to find out whether the debtor had any concealed hoard. It adds the thought of actual punishment. — *Schaff*. Archbishop Trench remarks that in the East, where there is a continual suspicion that those who may appear the poorest are actually in possession of secret hoards of wealth, the torture would be often applied, as it is now, to make the debtor reveal those hoards, or in order to wring the money from the compassion of his friends. — *Cook*. We may see in the tormentors the symbols of whatever agencies God employs in the work of righteous retribution, the stings of remorse, the scourge of conscience, the scorn and reproach of men, not excluding, of course, whatever elements of suffering lie behind the veil; in the life beyond the grave. — *Ellicott*. Till he should pay all that was due. This condition is the strongest possible way of expressing the eternal duration of his punishment. — *Trench*. The language of the parable seems to proceed on these two assumptions: that suffering neither expiates guilt, nor in itself amends the guilty; and that as sin has incurred a debt which can never be discharged, so the banishment, or rather the loss and misery of it, will be endless. — *Edersheim*.

35. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts: not merely in form and in words, but from sincere love, with true forgiveness. Forgive not every one his brother. (1) The parable must not be pressed to imply that the forgiveness of sins is ever granted by God and then afterwards withdrawn. It is one of those cases in which the form of the story requires certain incidents not designed to have a spiritual meaning. — *Stock*. But (2) it does mean that one who is himself unforgiving is also unforgiven. For he is not in a fit condition for forgiveness. It would make him worse instead of better. (3) Punishment of the incorrigible is not inconsistent with forgiving love. If the wild beast will not become tame, Love says that it *must* be chained. If men will not repent, then for the safety of the world they must be punished. (4) Forgiving others their injuries against us is not the ground of our forgiveness, but it is the test and proof that we may safely be forgiven. Thus, in the Lord's prayer, we are taught to pray, Forgive us our debts as we forgive (or have forgiven) our debtors.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Arnot, Trench, and Wm. M. Taylor, on *The Parables* are specially good. Dr. Bushnell's *Forgiveness and Law*. Archbishop Hare's *Alton Sermons*; Payson's *Sermons*, vol. 2, "The

Universal Law of Forgiveness"; Maurice, Van Dyke, and Boardman on *The Lord's Prayer*, "Forgive us our Debts"; Archbishop Hare's *Mission of the Spirit*, "Convincing of Sin"; Foster's *Cyclopedia of Illustrations*, I: 2338-2357; II: 8794-8812.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. We are not to let sin in the world alone; we are to make every effort to remove it.
2. To go alone to the one who has wronged us is the most loving way, and most hopeful of success.
3. It is a great privilege to gain a brother from one who would otherwise be an enemy.
4. If we cannot gain him after every effort, then we must love him as an enemy (Matt. 5: 44) and do all the good we can to him (Rom. 12: 19-21).
5. The desire of every good man is to lessen the sin of the world. The forgiving spirit does this (1) by keeping evil from our own hearts (revenge, hate, anger), and giving us the victory over ourselves; (2) by influencing others to repent and forsake their sin. Hate inflames hate, but love kindles love.
6. The parable teaches the duty of consideration and forbearance toward honest but unfortunate debtors — one generally overlooked. — *Abbott*.
7. It teaches the duty of forgiveness, which must be continuous and long-suffering (ver. 22), full and free, like the Lord's (ver. 27; compare Eph. 4: 32 and Matt. 6: 12), and from the heart (ver. 35); but is consistent with rebuking and convincing of sin (ver. 15), even as the Lord rebukes and convinces us. — *Abbott*.
8. We see the enormity of our sins against God, committed against such infinite goodness and love, such unnumbered favors, such efforts to make us good.
9. We are utterly unable to pay the debt of sin.
10. There will surely come a time of reckoning.
11. God loves to forgive, and has sent his Son to make atonement for us, so that he can forgive, and yet not increase the sin of the world.
12. The acceptance of forgiveness involves the obligation to forgive those who have trespassed against us.
13. The wrongs of our fellows against us are small compared with our sins against God.
14. The great difficulty we find in forgiving deep wrongs against ourselves shows us how great must be God's love, who so freely forgives us.
15. Those who refuse to forgive prove that they themselves are not forgiven, and not prepared for forgiveness.
16. When you pray the Lord's prayer, — "Forgive as we forgive," — be sure that you are praying for mercy and not for your own condemnation.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

So closely is this lesson joined to the last, that a brief review will bring us to our

SUBJECT, — FORGIVING AND BEING FORGIVEN.

I. THE TREATMENT OF THOSE WHO HAVE WRONGED US. We must turn to the previous verses, if we would see the occasion of Peter's question, and our full duty as taught in this lesson.

Every one receives real or imagined wrongs from others. Every child in the Sunday-school has had this experience. There are wrongs to property, to comfort, to happiness, to character and reputation.

Illustration. "Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands.
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And leaves me poor indeed." — *Shakespeare*.

Do all you can to remove the wrong, (1) by filling your own heart so full of love that there is no room for hate or anger; (2) go *alone* to the one who has wronged you. Do not publish the wrong.

Illustration. If you would put out a fire, do not scatter the firebrands everywhere. A little fire that could have been crushed with the foot may burn up a whole city.

Love is the power that overcomes sin. Practise Matt. 5: 44 and Rom. 12: 19-21.

II. HOW MANY TIMES TO FORGIVE (vers. 21, 22).

III. THE PARABLE OF FORGIVENESS (vers. 23-35). The three SCENES, and their APPLICATIONS.

EXAMPLES. Jesus on the cross (Luke 23: 34) and the martyr Stephen (Acts 7: 60).

Illustration. Conceive an unforgiving man, with heart full of wrath against his neighbor, with a memory which treasures up the little wrongs and insults and provocations he fancies himself to have received from that neighbor; conceive such a man praying to God Most High to forgive him his debts as he forgives his debtors. What, in the mouth of such a man, do these words mean? That you may fully understand their meaning, I will turn them into a prayer, which we will call *The Prayer of the Unforgiving Man*: "O God, I have sinned against thee many times; I have been often forgetful of thy goodness; I have broken thy laws; I have committed many secret sins. Deal with me, I beseech thee, O Lord, even as I deal with my neighbor. He hath not offended me one hundredth part as much as I have offended thee, but I cannot forgive him. He has been very ungrateful to me, though not an hundredth part as ungrateful as I have been to thee, yet I cannot overlook such base ingratitude. Deal with me, O Lord, I beseech thee, as I deal with him. I remember and treasure up every little trifle which shows how ill he has behaved to me. Deal with me, I beseech thee, O Lord, as I deal with him." Can anything be more shocking and horrible than such a prayer? Yet this is just the prayer the unforgiving man offers up, every time he repeats the Lord's Prayer. — *Archbishop Augustus Hare, in Alton Sermons* (condensed).

LESSON IX. — FEBRUARY 26.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER. — MATT. 19: 16-26.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* — MATT. 6: 24.

TIME. — March, A.D. 30. Several months after the last lesson.

PLACE. — On Christ's last journey to Jerusalem from the village of Ephraim, along the borders of Samaria and Galilee, and down the Jordan valley to Jericho. Probably in Perea, beyond Jordan. He had not yet reached Jericho.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Mark 10: 17-27; Luke 18: 18-27.

JESUS. — 33 years old and two or three months. A few weeks only before his crucifixion.

INTERVENING HISTORY. — A large number of events took place during these intervening months. Few of them are recorded in Matthew and Mark, but most of Luke 9: 51 to 18: 17, and of John 7: 2 to 11: 54, belongs here. During this time Jesus journeys twice to Jerusalem, raises Lazarus from the dead, works great miracles, and speaks many important parables.

INTRODUCTION.

By placing the three narratives together, we obtain a vivid picture of the circumstances.

Jesus was slowly making his last journey to Jerusalem, teaching and healing by the way. He had just taken some little children in his arms and blessed them, and gone out into the path or road, when the young ruler came running to him as described in this lesson.

16. And, behold, one came and said unto him,
¹Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may
 have eternal life?

And behold, one came to 16
 him and said, Master, what
 good thing shall I do, that I

¹ Luke 10: 25.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **A Rich Young Ruler seeking Eternal Life.** — Vers. 16, 17. 16. **And, behold:** as Jesus was starting again on his way from the house where the little children had been brought to him to be blessed (Mark 10: 17). **One came.** By a comparison with Mark and Luke we learn that he was (1) a ruler, probably of a synagogue; a leading man in Jewish religious circles. (2) He was young. (3) He was very rich. (4) Religiously trained. (5) He had heard of Jesus and listened to his teachings, or he would not have come to him in this way. (6) He had a lovable disposition (Mark 10: 21).

17. And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God:* but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

may have eternal life? And ¹⁷ he said unto him, Why asketh thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the com-

HIS CHARACTER. (1) He seems to have had from a worldly point of view an irreproachable moral character. He had resisted the overt and frequently corrupting influences around him. (2) He was a candid inquirer, breaking away from the routine religion of his synagogue, and recognizing truth and goodness wherever he saw it. (3) He was courageous. Only a brave heart could have enabled one in so prominent a position to risk the opposition and reproaches of his associates, and run and reverence in so public a manner the despised Nazarene. (4) He had high aspirations. He was not content with wealth and position and outward morality, but had set his heart on eternal life. (5) He was in earnest, as his conduct shows. But he also (6) was self-righteous, with the pride of virtue; and (7) set too high a value on worldly possessions. His heart was not right, and wrong or imperfect motives lay behind his outward goodness.

And said. He came running, and kneeled before Jesus in the public road. As Bunyan says, "They that will have eternal life must run for it; because the Devil, the law, sin, death, and hell would follow them." **Good Master:** or Teacher. The Rev. Ver. after the best manuscripts omits the "good" here and constructs Christ's reply accordingly. But the "good" is retained in Mark and Luke. Putting them together we have the whole conversation thus: "*Good Master,*" said the kneeling youth, and is interrupted by the Master: "*Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God.*" Daring no reply to this, the youth leaves it, and betakes himself to his object in addressing the Lord. "*What good thing shall I do,*" he says, "*that I may have eternal life?*" But again the Lord takes hold of the word good. "*Why asketh thou me concerning that which is good?*" he rejoins (Matt.). "*One there is who is good.*" — *MacDonald.* **Have eternal life.** In Mark the expression is "*inherit eternal life,*" that is, he wished to be a child of God, and as a child inherit from his Heavenly Father, and so have lasting possession of eternal life.

ETERNAL LIFE. (1) Eternal life is the true spiritual life of the soul,—that which is natural to it in its highest state. (2) It is the divine life which is implanted in us when we are born of the Spirit and become children of God. (3) Being divine and natural, it endures forever. (4) It is the life that belongs to heaven, which inspires all heavenly beings and makes heaven what it is. As Dr. John Brown beautifully says, "The perfect (tense) of the verb *live* is *love*." (5) It is the condition of all the highest blessings. These cannot even be known within the spiritual life. All pleasures and delights are nothing to the dead. (6) Eternal life, from its very nature, produces a perfect morality, the noblest conduct. (7) Of all things in the world eternal life is most worth the seeking. — *P.*

17. And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? This is the reading of Mark and Luke, and belongs in the conversation right after *Good Master*, as we saw above. The object was not to deny that Christ himself was good, but to lead the young man upward in his seeking to see where alone good could be found. — *P.* **There is none good . . . but God.** To those who see in this statement a repudiation of the divinity of Jesus Christ, Stier replies, "Either, There is none good but God; Christ is good; therefore Christ is God; or, There is none good but God; Christ is not God; therefore Christ is not good." There is no answer to this but to deny the sinlessness of Christ. — *Abbott.*

Then followed the young ruler's question, *What good thing shall I do*, etc., to which Jesus, seeking still to lift up his soul to the one source of good, replies in the words given in the Rev. Ver. of Matthew, "**Why asketh thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is Good.**" If you wish to know about the good, you must rise inquiringly to God. He who is the Supreme Good for the whole universe is God. And hence that which is the supreme good for every moral creature to do and to be must be learned from God, must be found in the will of God. — *Morison.*

THE OBJECT of the reply of Jesus was therefore (1) to lead the young man to truer ideas of what goodness and eternal life were; (2) to lead him from self-righteousness to the true and only source of the highest good; (3) to raise the youth's ideas of himself as the Son of God, as the source of truth and good, and thus to give authority in his mind to his teachings and to his command to sell all that he had. — *P.*

II. The Way to Eternal Life by the Commandments. — Vers. 17-20. 17. **But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.** The Greek verb rendered *keep* (τηρειω) carries with it the idea of watchfulness; keep, as one keeps a prisoner committed to his charge. — *Abbott.* This was the **SECOND STEP** in the upward leading of the young ruler.

18. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, ¹Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

19. ²Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, ³Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

20. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

mandments. He saith unto 18 him, Which? And Jesus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy 19 mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The 20 young man saith unto him, All these things have I observed: what lack I yet?

¹ Ex. 20: 13. Deut. 5: 17. ² Matt. 15: 4. ³ Lev. 19: 18. Rom. 13: 9. Gal. 5: 14. Jas. 2: 8.

He first was shown the ideal of goodness and its source, and taught that he had yet failed of this ideal for none was good except God. Thus he would be convicted of sin. Now he is shown that he *must have this same kind of goodness* if he would have eternal life. — P.

KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS, AND ETERNAL LIFE. (1) There is no eternal life without the keeping of the commandments. Obedience to the commandments is the natural fruit of eternal life. For (2) the commandments are the expression of the true principles of holy living. Good people, saints, and angels in heaven live according to the commandments. Therefore if any one would have eternal life, he must have that heart which would lead him to keep the commandments. (3) A person may keep the commandments in outward form and yet not have eternal life. (4) The commandments are the divine standard which shows us how much we have failed in the true life, and by which the Holy Spirit convinces us of sin and need. For (5) no one ever entered eternal life by merely trying to keep the commandments. (6) Jesus Christ has come to save us, by implanting that new life which will lead to the keeping of the commandments. Jesus saves not *in* sin, but *from* sin. (a) By his atonement he brings forgiveness of the past; (b) he sets up a perfect ideal; (c) he furnishes every motive; (d) he gives the new heart and life; (e) he sends the life-giving spirit. — P.

18. He saith unto him, Which? *what kind?* It is as if the inquirer had said, *You must doubtless have a special reference to very high and difficult commandments. I should like to know of what kind they are.* — Morison. He felt that he had kept the common commandments of daily life. Jesus said, thou shalt do no murder, etc. Nothing is here said of the first table of the law, our duties toward God, but only of duties toward men, which the young man imagined he had kept, and the keeping of which could most easily be seen and measured. Thus Jesus would compel him to feel his own lack, and fasten conviction on his conscience.

19. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. A summing-up of duties to man, from Lev. 19: 18; comp. Mark 12: 31. — Riddle.

20. All these things have I kept (from my youth up); what lack I yet? Externally, in outward form, he had made them the rule of his life, and he did not remember any special times of disobedience. Indeed, he had sincerely tried to live a truly moral life. Now if this was eternal life, why did he not already possess it? What was yet-lacking?

NOTE I. — That he was not yet fully convicted of sin. He had not yet seen the Law in the dazzling purity of its holiness, in the sublimity of its spirit of love, and therefore did not realize how black his own life was in comparison.

NOTE II. — That yet he was not satisfied. He knew that with all *his* keeping of the law he had not attained to eternal life. How many of us have had the same experience, and found that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be saved." — P.

III. **One Thing thou lackest.** — Vers. 21, 22. Mark tells us, at this point, that Jesus, beholding him, loved him. He was so noble, so earnest and sincere in his seeking, so lovable, that the soul of Jesus was drawn out toward him. — P.

NOTE. — It was *because* Jesus loved him, *because* he saw how grand and glorious were the possibilities before him, that he took him by the hand to help him up the one last step by which he would enter the door to eternal life. — P. To make a man happy as a lark *might be* to do him grievous wrong: to make a man wake, rise, look up, turn, is worth the life and death of the Son of the Eternal. The youth, climbing the stair of eternal life, had come to a landing-place where not a step more was visible. On the cloud-swathed platform he stands looking in vain for further ascent. While thus he stands, alone and helpless, behold the form of the Son of man! It is God himself come to meet the climbing youth, to take him by the hand, and lead him up his own stair, the only stair by which ascent can be made. He shows him the first step of it through the mist. His feet are heavy; they have

21. Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, ¹go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

22. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Jesus said unto him, If thou ²¹wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. But when the ²²young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great pos-

¹ Matt. 6: 20. Luke 12: 33; 16: 9. Acts 2: 45. 1 Tim. 6: 18, 19.

golden shoes. To go up that stair, he must throw aside his shoes. He must walk barefooted into life eternal. — *George Macdonald.*

21. Jesus said unto him, "One thing thou lackest" (Mark). He was very near the kingdom, but there was one essential wanting.

THE ONE THING LACKING was Love, and Faith, its Siamese twin, — faithful love and loving faith expressed in entire consecration of all he was and all he had to God. It was like the sun lacking light, or a fire lacking heat, or a man lacking a soul. — *P.* If thou wilt be perfect, *i.e.*, complete, lacking nothing. If you really want eternal life. He now proposes a short, concise test, and a means of coming into life. — *P.* Go and sell that thou hast. The injunction of the Lord is manifestly intended to bring out the fact that the young man had made an idol of his riches, and hence that he utterly contravened the spirit, even of the first commandment. — *Lange.* The amiable young man was, with all his amiability, in extreme spiritual peril, in consequence of his peculiar state of heart. The Saviour read it at a glance, and perceived that there was one fetter that was enslaving him, the inordinate love of this present world and its possessions. Hence he was not loving his God with all his soul, on the one hand; neither was he, on the other, loving his neighbor as he loved himself. There was in his case, it seems, but one way of snapping the fetter; and therefore the Saviour said to him, *Sell thy possessions.* The outward test revealed the inward want; and this inward want, loving the things of God less than the things of the world, was the fatal defect which Jesus, in thus bringing it to his knowledge, would have him supply. — *Morison.* And give to the poor. This was the purpose for which he was to sell. He was to use it for God and humanity, not himself. And thou shalt have treasure in heaven: you will have the character which belongs to heaven, and God will reward you abundantly there for all your self-denials for his sake. The treasure was thus the eternal life he sought. See Matt. 6: 19-21. And come: Mark adds that he must "take up his cross," the self-denial and suffering involved in giving up his possessions and following Christ. And follow me. To follow Jesus then meant to be a personal attendant on his ministry; to go about with him from place to place, as well as to imitate and obey him. Now it means, 1st, to obey his commandments; 2d, to imitate his example, and to live like him. — *Barnes.* Whenever property interferes with following Christ, it must be given up; and he who would be a Christian must be ready to relinquish it for Christ's sake, not to win salvation, nor to buy a superior place in heaven. — *Schaff.* The test was not an unusual one. The disciples had abandoned their all to follow Christ (Matt. 4: 22; 9: 9; 19: 27). If this ruler was to be with them, he must be one of them, in his voluntary poverty. — *Abbott.*

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US. The principle is the same for us as for him; but the form it takes in action may differ. That principle is, that we are to give up everything to Christ — our property, our time, our all — *to use as he would have us.* We are to give so much as he directs; to leave all, and be missionaries, if he demands; to suffer the loss of all, if that is needful, in order that we may do right; to spend upon our families, our business, our pleasure, just as Christ would have us, — we seeking to learn what is his will. One cannot be a Christian, and save out a single dollar, a single moment, a single part of his life, from this consecration of all to Christ. Evidently Christ does not want us *all* to give our whole property to the poor, for then some one must immediately give to us; there would be no one to buy; the promises of the Gospel as to this world would not all be fulfilled (see vers. 28, 29). Zaccheus gave half of his property to the poor and was accepted. See 1 Cor. 7: 17, 20, 24. But the principle of consecration of property and everything to God remains forever; and it applies to all, the poor as well as rich. — *P.*

22. He went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. He went away reluctantly, after a great struggle, but he went. He wanted eternal life, but he wanted his possessions more, and he could not have both. How little joy his stately houses and broad lands would give him after this! He could never again look upon them without seeing on them in flaming letters, like those on the barrels in Deacon Giles' distillery, "This cost me

23. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That ¹a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

25. When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

26. But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; ²but with God all things are possible.

sessions. And Jesus said unto ³his disciples, Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto ⁴you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And ⁵when the disciples heard it, they were astonished exceedingly, saying, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking ⁶upon *them* said to them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

¹ Mark 10: 24. ² 1 Cor. 1: 26. ³ 1 Tim. 6: 9, 10. ⁴ Gen. 18: 14. ⁵ Job 42: 2. ⁶ Jer. 32: 17. Zech. 8: 6. Luke 1: 37.

eternal life!" — *P.* The incident recalls the parable of the "merchant man seeking goodly pearls" (13: 45, 46). Here is a seeker after good, the pearl is found: will he not sell all that he hath and buy it? — *Cam. Bible.* But if he had, he would have received an hundred-fold in return, as Jesus afterwards promised to Peter (vers. 27-29).

HINDRANCES TO ETERNAL LIFE. Vers. 23-26. 23. A rich man shall hardly: with great difficulty. Enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is one of the most difficult things in the world to deal conscientiously with riches, that is, to keep a good conscience and be rich. It is easy to be rich and honest in the human plane of things. But to take up riches to the higher plane, in which the will and wish of God are recognized and adopted as the rule of life, and consequently as the rule of giving and of keeping, is one of the severest possible tests to which the human heart can be subjected. — *Morison.* Jesus explained himself, according to Mark 10: 24, "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" — *G. W. Clark.*

24. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. The camel being the largest animal with which the Jews were acquainted, its name became proverbial for denoting anything remarkably large; and "a camel's passing through a needle's eye" came, by consequence, as appears from some rabbinical writings, to express a thing absolutely impossible. — *George Campbell*, "Oriental Proverbs." "Just as soon will an elephant pass through the spout of a kettle." — *Roberts.* The eye of a needle is either the small door sometimes made in the city gates, called the needle's eye by the Arabs, — large enough for a man, but too small for a camel, — or rather the Oriental needle, of burnished iron, from two to five inches long, or their large ivory tape-needle. — *Van Lennep.* Than for a rich man to enter, etc. A rich man rather means one who loves his riches, and makes an idol of them; or one who supremely desires to be rich, — "them that trust in riches." While he has this feeling, it is literally impossible that he should be a Christian. For religion is the love of God, rather than the world; the love of Jesus and his cause, more than gold. — *Barnes.*

WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT FOR THE RICH TO ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD? (1) Because they feel that they have so much to give up to Christ. (2) Because of the tendency to trust in riches, and not to feel the need of a Saviour. (3) Because riches are apt to engender pride that will not stoop to the humble service of God. (4) Because rich men are apt to be allied in business and socially with many who are not Christians, and it requires great courage and faith to break away. (5) Because in many cases they will have to restore ill-gotten riches, to change their business or methods of business and sources of gain, which are not truly Christian. — *P.*

25. His disciples . . . were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? Like all Jews, they had been accustomed to regard worldly prosperity as a special mark of the favor of God, for their ancient Scriptures seemed always to connect the enjoyment of temporal blessings with obedience to the divine law. They still, moreover, secretly cherished the hope of an earthly kingdom of the Messiah, in which riches would play a great part. — *Geikie.*

26. With men this is impossible: no man, anywhere, he replies, could be saved, if his salvation depended on men. The Saviour is touching on the fundamental element of evangelical truth, — *man cannot be a saviour to himself; men cannot be saviours to one another.* — *Morison.* But with God all things are possible. Our Lord means to represent that the salvation of a rich man bears to the ordinary salvation of common men the same relation that a miracle does to an ordinary transaction. — *Whedon.* God can take away the

rich man's trust in riches, and make him over anew. He can put into his heart new motives, that will make him more diligent in business than the love of riches does; that will make him full of usefulness and helpfulness. All this, and infinitely more, by the mission and atonement of Christ.

OTHER HINDRANCES. A large proportion of the children who study this lesson will not be kept out of the kingdom by riches. But the principles here taught will apply to them. Some are hindered by their parent's riches, some by the desire of riches, some by the desire for honor and praise, some by fear of what their companions will say, some by wrong acts they are unwilling to confess, some by bad habits they are unwilling to give up. — *P.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

A most effective illustration is found in the tract, *Captain Ball's Experience*; also in Trench's *Poems*, "Mahmoud the Idol-Breaker." Three sermons by MacDonald, in Dr. C. S. Robinson's *Sabbath Evening*; William Adams's *Conversations of Christ with Representative Men*, "The Moralist"; George Salmon's *Reign of Law*, "The Young Ruler"; Prof. W. G. T. Shedd's *Sermons to the Natural Man*, "The Sin of Omission." *Sermons*, by H. W. Beecher, series 5; by J. Wesley; Guthrie's *Way of Life*, "One Thing Needful"; Barnes' *Way of Salvation*, "The Struggles of a Convicted Sinner"; Whateley's *Annotations on Bacon's Essays*, p. 366, "Riches"; Bertram's *Homiletic Cyclopædia*, 4365, "Ruined by Riches"; 4371, "The Devil's Bait"; 4397, "The Sailor who would die Rich"; 4418, "The Fly in the Honey"; Cawdray's *Storehouse of Similies*, pp. 303-308, "Riches and their Dangers"; Spencer's *Things New and Old*, 156, "The Narrow-mouthed Bottle."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Ver. 16. The most important thing any one can do is to seek earnestly after eternal life.
2. Moreover, it is a matter of haste. We need it now. If we delay, it may be too late.
3. We should go to Jesus to find eternal life.
4. God himself is good, and the Good to be sought. To be like him, to be his children, heirs of his character and home, is eternal life.
5. Vers. 17-19. The commandments are the outward expressions of holiness. No one can have eternal life who does not strive to live according to them.
6. Ver. 20. An outward and formal keeping of the law may make us self-righteous, for this can be easily obtained; as a child seeing a star rising over the hills may think it but a street-lamp, and that he can reach it; but whosoever sees the spirit of the law, as the expression of God's holy character, will be convicted of sin; as to the astronomer the stars are infinitely above him, measureless worlds of light.
7. The Devil never tempts us with more success than when he tempts us with a sight of our good actions. — *Bishop Wilson.*
8. No outward morality, however perfect, will satisfy the soul. There is ever something lacking, unsatisfactory.
9. Vers. 21, 22. Only those who consecrate all they have and are to God can have eternal life; for the faith and love which leads to this consecration are the soul of eternal life.
10. One may be very attractive, very moral outwardly, and yet not be a child of God.
11. The right man to follow any cause, be it what it will, is he who loves it well enough to fling to it everything he has in the world, and then think that not enough, and so fling himself after it. — *Jean Ingelow.*
12. Vers. 23-26. Riches, by engendering pride, self-sufficiency, cares, and selfishness, often by being gained or kept by fraud and oppression, keep many from the kingdom.
13. The real evil is in not the amount, but the love, of riches. To love riches while we have them not, is as bad as to love them when we have them.
14. Let us never despair for ourselves or others so long as our God can do all things.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

INTRODUCTION. The last lesson. The change in time and place to this lesson. Use the map. The blessing of little children just before the young ruler came. The comparison of the different accounts.

SUBJECT, — SEEKING ETERNAL LIFE.

I. A YOUNG MAN SEEKING ETERNAL LIFE (vers. 16, 17). The position and character of the young man. What led him — what leads others — to seek eternal life. What is eternal life? The steps by which the young man was led on toward eternal life.

II. THE ATTEMPT TO GAIN ETERNAL LIFE BY KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS (vers. 18-20). The spirit that would keep the commandments is necessary to eternal life (Rev. 21: 27). But no one ever climbed up to heaven by the commandments (Gal. 3: 11). They show what we ought to be. They convict of sin, and lead to Christ, who can save.

Illustration. The boy in a boat floating on the stream, and looking at the water and not at the shore, imagines the stream is quiet, and does not flow fast. But as soon as he looks at a fixed point on the shore, and begins to row against the stream, he learns how rapidly it runs. So when one really tries to keep the law in the strictness of its spirit, he begins to feel his weakness and sin, where before he felt himself almost good enough. A like illustration can be drawn from one on an express train: looking at the car and our companions, we seem to be almost standing still. So we on the surface of the earth are moving a thousand miles an hour without perceiving the motion. A fixed point near by will convict us of motion.

III. ITS FAILURE (vers. 20-22). Something is always lacking, and we can never gain that holiness we need till we consecrate all to Jesus and follow him.

Illustrations. We cannot push a railroad train by our hands, try we never so hard; but we can let on the steam, and thus move it. We cannot make ourselves good by trying to keep the commandments, but we can go to Jesus, who will give us a new heart, a new life, that will lead us to holiness.

Illustration. I once read of a schoolmaster who, having helped many persons, trusted for salvation to his good works. One night he dreamed that he was climbing up to heaven on a shining ladder like Jacob's at Bethel. He mounted far up toward the sky, when he came to a place where the rungs were gone. Above him rose the ladder to heaven, but he could go no farther. He saw in this ladder his own good works, but saw that there were great deficiencies in them,—sins of omission which he could not span. There was no hope of heaven in this way.

Illustration. Dr. Wm. M. Taylor tells a story of some sailors who went ashore on a spree, and returning to their vessel late in the evening, got into their boat, and began to row toward the ship. They rowed all night, but could not reach their destination. When daylight came, they found that they had not unfastened their boat, but were tied to the wharf. So men, to some sin, some property, or hope they are unwilling to give up.

IV. HINDRANCES TO ETERNAL LIFE (vers. 23-26). The principle of the lesson applies to all, even to children. Find out and remove their hindrances.

Illustration. A ship lately came into port which had long been out upon the sea. The coal gave out; then everything in turn that would burn—cargo, stores, spars, furniture—had to be burned to bring the vessel to the harbor. She anchored at last, with nothing left worth anchoring. So many rich men come into the port of old age, having burned up everything of manhood, character, and hope,—rich in the world's eyes, mayhap, but wretched wrecks in God's sight.—*Sunday-School Times.*

LESSON X. — MARCH 4.

CHRIST'S LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM. — MATT. 20: 17-29.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*—MATT. 20: 28.

TIME.—March, A.D. 30; soon after the last lesson.

PLACE.—In the Jordan valley, perhaps on the Perea or eastern side, on Christ's last journey from Ephraim, but before he had reached Jericho.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Mark 10: 32-46. The first three verses are also found in Luke 18: 31-34.

JESUS.—33 years and three months old; about two weeks before his crucifixion.

INTRODUCTION.

When Jesus had taught the doctrine of Entire Consecration, in a way that astonished his disciples, taking the Young Ruler as his text (our last lesson), Peter immediately applied it to himself and his fellow-disciples, asking what they should have, seeing they had left all

and followed Jesus. Jesus promised them an hundred-fold, as the Young Ruler himself would have received had he trusted him. Jesus then continued his explanations about the kingdom of heaven by the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. Soon after this belongs our lesson for to-day.

17. ¹ And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,

18. ² Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,

And as Jesus was going up ¹⁷ to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples apart, and in the way he said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes; and they shall condemn him to

¹ Mark 10: 32. Luke 18: 31. John 12: 12. ² Matt. 16: 21.

EXPLANATORY.

I. An Example of Heroic Greatness. — Vers. 17-19. **THE SCENE.** There are few pictures in the Gospel more striking than this of Jesus going forth to his death, and walking alone along the path into the deep valley, while behind him, in awful reverence and mingled anticipations of dread and hope, the disciples walked, and dared not disturb his meditations. — *Farrar*.

17. And Jesus going up. Mark tells us that they were in the highway (where multitudes were on their way to the Passover, which was close at hand). He also tells us that Jesus had gone on before his disciples, as he always does. "The Master does not ask us to walk in unknown or untried paths. We find him always before us, leaving unmistakable footprints for our guidance all along the way. He leads; we have but to follow." — *E. H. Walcott*. The disciples, looking at Jesus, were amazed and afraid (Mark 10: 32). **WHY?** (1) Because they saw him going on bravely, with sublime heroism, "like the stars, not hasting, not tarrying," into the very face of danger and death. This was a perfect example of greatness. Only a short time before this, in Jerusalem, the Jews had "sought to assassinate Jesus, twice mobbed him, and once issued an order for his arrest (John 7: 19, 32; 8: 59; 10: 31, 39)." Their enmity was increased by the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11: 47, 48, 53, 56, 57), and they were at this time making strenuous efforts to find him and kill him. (2) This action seemed to them absolutely contradictory to their expectations, arising from Jesus' own declaration but a brief time before, that the Son of man should sit on a throne of glory, and his twelve disciples with him on twelve thrones. And now he was going straight into the jaws of death, instead of to a throne. (3) It is possible that "somehow of a transfiguration came over him. That (on Hermon) was the transfiguration of rapture, faith, and joy; this, the transfiguration of resignation with its lowly peace, of obedience with its stately calm, of sacrifice with its joy set before it" (*Richard Glover*). — **P. Going up to Jerusalem:** from Ephraim, sixteen miles northeast of the city, where he had spent some weeks in retirement after the raising of Lazarus (John 11: 54). He first went up to the borders of Galilee and Samaria, thence to the Jordan, in whose valley they now were. **Took the twelve disciples apart in the way:** from the thronging multitudes, before and behind, journeying on the same errand. In general, the Saviour's little group would get mixed with the crowd; but at times, and for specific purposes, they would cluster together by themselves. — *Morison*. He now gathered them together because he had something special to say to them.

THE INSTRUCTION. **18. Behold, we go (are going) up to Jerusalem.** That is settled. There is to be no question. Jerusalem, as the site of the temple and the altar of sacrifice, as the capital of the Jewish nation, was the place where the great sacrifice, to which all the others pointed, should be made, and where the new kingdom should begin. **And the Son of man shall be betrayed, etc.** This was the third prophecy of his sufferings (Matt. 16: 21; 17: 22), but now for the first time he distinctly declares that he is to be crucified. — *Abbott*. These statements were considered under Lesson V.

THE OBJECT OF THIS PROPHECY. 1. It was to write indelibly upon their inmost souls the spiritual nature of his kingdom, and its central fact and truth, — "Christ and him crucified." 2. They needed this preparation for what was in the immediate future, so that when they saw him die on the cross, instead of having their faith in him shaken by that event, they would have it established, by regarding it as the fulfilment of his predictions, and the

19. ¹ And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify *him*: and the third day he shall rise again.

20. ² Then came to him the mother of ³ Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him.

21. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons ⁴ may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

death, and shall deliver him: ¹⁹ unto the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify: and the third day he shall be raised up.

Then came to him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, worshipping *him*, and asking a certain thing of him. And he said ²¹ unto her, What wouldst thou? She saith unto him, Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in

¹ Matt. 27: 2.

Mark 15: 1, 16.

Luke 23: 1.

³ Matt. 4: 21.

John 18: 28.

⁴ Matt. 19: 28.

Acts 3: 13.

² Mark 10: 35.

pathway to his glory. — *R. R. Meredith*. 3. It showed to them and to all men that Jesus' sacrifice was entirely voluntary. "I lay down my life." "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." There was no injustice of God forcing Jesus to bear our sins, but only the sublime heroism that gave up life to save men.

19. And the third day he shall rise again. Jesus always opened before his disciples the door of glory beyond the cross, rifted the clouds that hung so dark about them. The sufferings and death must come, but in the resurrection they could see how his promises of thrones and a kingdom could be fulfilled. And yet, Luke tells us (18: 34) they did not understand these things. Still the seed was planted that in time would ripen into perfect comprehension. — *P*.

II. An Example of False Ambition for Greatness. — Vers. 20-24. 20. The mother of Zebedee's children: rather, *the mother of the sons of Zebedee*. From comparing 27: 55, 56 with Mark 15: 40; 16: 1, it appears that her name was Salome. The sons were James and John (Mark 10: 35). According to Mark, the sons came making the request for themselves, which is in entire harmony with Matthew, who says that the mother of the sons of Zebedee came with her sons. They asked through their mother, and with their mother. — *G. W. Clark*. Probably the two brethren had directed this request *through their mother*, because they remembered the rebuke which had followed their former contention about precedence (18: 1-3; Mark 9: 33-37). — *Alford*. Worshipping him: that is, *doing obeisance*, prostrating herself, with her sons, as was usual in asking a favor of a king. Desiring a certain thing of him. She asked a favor, but did not at once tell what it was, probably because doubtful of the propriety of the request.

21. What wilt thou? Jesus would not grant an indefinite request of the kind they asked, including in it so many possible things which might be hurtful or unwise. Moreover, it was best for them to spread out in the clear light their secret thoughts and hopes. Such a statement is often more than half a cure. Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom: that is, in the two chief places of honor. The first place of honor was the right hand of the sovereign; the second, the left hand. See Josephus, *Ant.* vi. 11: 9. They doubtless still expected an outward kingdom of worldly splendor. Not long before this Jesus had told the disciples that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, while he sat on his own throne of glory (Matt. 19: 28), and they felt sure that the time must now be close at hand. They must secure their places soon, or some one else would be before them. — *P*. Observe, the promises of the Lord are places of *trust*, *power*, and *activity* (Matt. 19: 28; 25: 21, 23). The request here is simply for places of *honor*. — *Abbott*. That venomous worm of goodness, vainglory. — *Leighton*. Adam and Eve were happy in the garden of Eden until they desired to be as gods. — *Tyng*. Pride is the inmost coat, which we put off last, and which we put on first. — *Bishop Hall*.

MOTIVES FOR THEIR REQUEST. These two disciples were good men, but still imperfect, and their motives were of mingled good and evil. Close beside each wrong motive was a better one, which largely concealed from their eyes the selfishness of their aims. (1) One motive was selfish ambition. The ambition of James and John, when unconverted, probably aimed at worldly wealth and influence. At their conversion their ambition accommodated itself to the change, and now seeks spiritual influence and saintly eminence with the same ardor. It is quite as selfish and unworthy a motive as ever; but, aiming at more respectable dignities, it mistakes itself for a virtue — *R. Glover*. (2) They sought for honor and power

22. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of ¹ the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with ² the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

23. And he saith unto them, ³ Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with : but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They say unto him, We are able. He saith unto ²³ them, My cup indeed ye shall drink : but to sit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give, but *it is for them for whom it hath been prepared of my Father.*

¹ Matt. 26 : 39, 42.

Mark 14 : 36.

Luke 22 : 42.

John 18 : 11.

² Luke 12 : 50.³ Acts 12 : 2.

Rom. 8 : 17.

2 Cor. 1 : 7.

Rev. 1 : 9.

for themselves ; but doubtless in their own mind they felt that they would thus have larger usefulness, more power for good. (3) They had some reason for expecting these places, for John was known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (Jonn 13 : 23 ; 19 : 26) ; they had been honored by the new name "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3 : 17) ; they had been among the chosen three at the Transfiguration (Matt. 17 : 1) ; they had, in a worldly view, a somewhat higher social position than the others. But Peter had received like honors with them, he had been called the rock, and to him had been given the keys, and he had made himself prominent by his ready speech ; so they may have feared that he would take precedence of them, and domineer over them. (4) There were better motives intermingled. What they desired would keep them very near the Master they loved. It would increase their usefulness. It would give them more employment in the kingdom they wished to come. It showed faith in Jesus and his promises. It showed courage ; that they would go with Jesus to the cross, in order to wear the crown with him. — *P.*

22. **Ye know not what ye ask.** An illustration, this, of IGNORANT PRAYER. Within a month they saw the places on his right hand and on his left occupied by the two thieves in the crucifixion ; and they could not have failed to realize then the solemn significance of Christ's declaration, and of the question which followed. — *Abbott.* They knew not the greatness of the favor they asked, — how blessed beyond their highest dreams it was to sit on the right hand of the Son of God, how radiant the glories of that kingdom were to be. They knew not how hard the way, nor how difficult the conditions on which alone they could have their desire. No one knows enough to wisely choose his own lot. There are hidden cares and burdens and trials in the riches and honors we seek, — "the loudest laugh of hell, the pride of dying rich : " there are glories and joys and powers in the future as yet concealed from us. They only are wise who desire that God's wisdom and love should choose their lot for them. — *P.*

THE CONDITION OF CHIEF PLACE IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM. **Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?** Have you counted the cost? Can you pay the price? The *cup* is an Old-Testament image of a man's lot, or portion, as holding what of life God pours out for him. — *Jacobus.* He who knows nothing of the cup of Christ's passion will have no part in the cup of his joy. — *Heubner.* **Be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.** Baptism was the ordinance, the necessary condition, by which one could enjoy the privileges of the visible church. Could these disciples endure the conditions — the agony, the humiliation, the cross — through which alone Christ could enter his glory, and become the king of the world? — *P.* Are ye able and fit to be dipped or drenched in those deep waters of affliction, pains, and miseries, in which I must shortly be drenched? — *Petter.* The distinction between the two figures seems to be twofold : (1) the *cup* signifies inward, the *baptism* outward, suffering, drinking and baptizing being respectively an inward and outward application of water ; (2) the *cup* signifies suffering voluntarily taken, or "drunk," and the baptism what is endured at the hands of others. — *Eugene Stock.* **They say unto him, We are able.** The language of assurance ; but assurance may be of faith or of ignorance ; here it is of ignorance. They could say this because they knew not what it meant. When the Master drank the cup they shared not his sorrow, but slept ; when he entered into the baptism of his Passion they forsook him and fled (Mark 14 : 33-37, 50). — *Abbott.* But they were among the very bravest of the disciples.

23. **Ye shall drink indeed of my cup.** They cannot do it now ; but in due time they shall follow him ; they shall rise to their calling, and bravely meet all its risks and hardships. — *B. R. C.* One of these brethren was the first of the apostles to drink the cup of suffering,

24. ¹ And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

25. But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

26. ² But it shall not be so among you: but ³ whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

And when the ten heard *it*, ²⁴ they were moved with indignation concerning the two brethren. But Jesus called them ²⁵ unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall ²⁶ it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your min-

¹ Mark 10: 41. Luke 22: 24, 25. ² 1 Pet. 5: 3. ³ Matt. 23: 11. Mark 9: 35; 10: 43.

and be baptized with the baptism of blood (Acts 12: 1, 2); the other had the longest experience among them of a life of trouble and persecution. — *Alford*. He would teach us what great capacities and hidden powers lie in a true disciple's life, capacities which are never suspected until they are called into exercise. No man knows his own strength: far less is he able to foresee the divine strength which shall be added to his own. — *Bible Readers' Com.* But to sit on my right hand, etc. Omit, in the rest of this verse, the added words printed in italics, and the sense is plain. "*Is not mine to give, except (to those) for whom it is prepared of my Father.*" Our Lord means that such dignities as his disciples desired would not, and could not, be conferred in a capricious way by a mere act of the sovereign's pleasure. There could be no scope, in such high matters, for personal favoritism. It was in vain, therefore, for any to attempt to steal a march on their fellow-servants. What they asked has been divinely prepared for those who are most worthy, those who have done most, and in heart and will sacrificed most, and suffered most. In the kingdom of heaven there is no chance of the highest posts and dignities being conferred on incompetent or inferior servants. The highest in excellence will be the highest in honor. It is for such, whether they be apostles, or ordinary preachers, or humble Sabbath-school teachers, whether they be crowned monarchs, or the lowliest of menials, that the highest places have been prepared by the Father in his all-embracing purpose and plan. — *Morison*. The things God hath "prepared" may be divided into two classes, — the *given* and the *gained*. Light, air, existence, Jesus, the Bible, are in the former class, the *given*. Luxuriant crops, mental discipline, knowledge, character, are of the second class, the *gained*. Greatness is of this latter class: it cannot be *directly* given. No one can carry thee up the "holy hill" of true greatness. Thou must climb its height thyself, though the Father hath prepared it for thee. — *Genius of the Gospel*. Our Lord, it will be observed, does not *deny* the petition of James and John, or say they shall not occupy the place in his kingdom which they now improperly sought. For aught we know, *that may be their true place*. All we are sure of is, that their asking it was displeasing to him and so was not fitted to gain their object, but just the reverse.

24. And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation. This shows that they had the same feelings as the two brothers. There was ground for indignation, if it were perfectly unselfish. But apparently they were guilty of the very common act of showing in our complaints of others the very faults in ourselves which we condemn in them. The selfish think others are selfish; the fretful think others are in bad temper. They were all in one boat. They all alike needed the instruction which Jesus proceeds to give. — *P.*

III. The True Doctrine; Greatness through Humble Service. — Vers. 25-29.

25. But Jesus called them *unto him*. Their controversy in the last verse had been carried on aside and apart from Jesus. — *Abbott*. Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles: *i.e.*, this is the plan in the worldly kingdoms, in distinction from his spiritual kingdom. Exercise dominion over them. Lord it over them, exercise tyrannical and arbitrary power, implying a "wrong exercise of authority, in the interest, not of the subjects but of the rulers." — *Handy Com.* They that are great. Even the subordinate officials, governors and magistrates, exercise the same authority, seeking to get all they can from the people, and not to do them all the good they can. They are considered great in proportion to the numbers who serve them.

26. But it shall not be so among you. The whole principle of Christ's kingdom is the exact opposite of the usual worldly plan. No such lordship, no such authority, can be tolerated in your fraternity. Men prominent in the church should be the first to heed this admonition. — *Covales*. Nearly all the evils that have come to the church have come through a disregard of this command, — a desire to be honored and to rule, rather than to serve and

27. And ¹whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

28. ²Even as the ³Son of man came not to be ministered unto, ⁴but to minister, and ⁵to give his life a ransom for many.

29. And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

ister; and whosoever would ²⁷be first among you shall be your servant; even as the ²⁸Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

And as they went out from ²⁹Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

¹ Matt. 18: 4.

² John 13: 4.

³ Phil. 2: 7.

⁴ Luke 22: 27.

John 13: 14.

⁵ Isa. 53: 10, 11.

Dan. 9: 24, 26. John 11: 51, 52.

to help. — *P.* Fling away ambition: by that sin fell the angels. How can man, then, the image of his Maker, hope to win by it? — *Shakespeare*. But **whosoever will be great among you**. We must be careful to notice that he did not forbid ambition as a motive; he sought only to direct it into a new exercise. — *C. S. Robinson*. The desire to be greater than others is always a wrong ambition. The desire to be as great, as good, as useful as possible, to grow and improve, is right, but has its dangers. But the desire to serve others can never be too strong. — *P.* **Let him be your minister: servant**. The word means an ordinary servant in the household. What Jesus teaches is the dignity of service in the kingdom of heaven. The measure of true greatness is not determined by the numbers that attend on us, but rather by *the numbers we benevolently attend upon*. Its sceptre is love, not force; its throne is in the heart. — *Genius of the Gospel*.

27. **Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant**. The word "minister" in the former verse is a name given to any who occasionally attended others, or was stately employed to render a particular kind of service; but "servant" here (or *slave*) signifies one whose whole business is to serve. — *Doddridge*. Within the circle of the kingdom of heaven *the loftiest is the lowliest, and the lowliest is the loftiest*. It is so much nobler to do good than to get good. It is so much more glorious to glorify than to be glorified. — *Morison*. This is true of the church as a whole, as well as each individual in it. It has power and true success, only so far as it seeks to help all people, and does not seek authority or honor for itself. The church that arrogates authority, that seeks only its own culture, that labors to attract the rich and the honored that it may be financially strong, is on the high way to its own destruction. That church will have the most success which does the most to convert and elevate the people. — *P.*

28. *Jesus now cites his own example*. **The Son of man came not to be ministered unto**. His appearing in the world was not to be ministered unto, not to be personally served by others, nor to exercise an external authority for his own external interest, but to serve others, as his whole ministry showed. — *Schaff*. **But to minister**. In no case did Jesus seek honor from men, but always how he might help and serve men. He asks of us only what he did himself. He shows us by example the only road to true greatness. It is the common suffrage of the race that no one can be truly great without this disinterested love, and that, however great a man may seem, selfishness always diminishes or removes his crown and his throne. — *P.* **Give his life a ransom**. A ransom is a *price of deliverance*. He looked upon men as captives, and he by his life paid the price for their salvation. In this, as well as in numberless other passages of the New Testament, it is as plain as words can make anything, that the death of Christ is proposed to us as our sacrifice and reconciliation, our atonement and redemption. It is not possible for any one who considers these expressions to imagine that Christ's death was only a confirmation of his Gospel, a pattern of a holy and patient suffering of death, and a clear proof of a resurrection. — *Burnett*. **For many**. The ransom is offered for *all* (1 Tim. 2: 6). It is efficacious for the *many* who accept it, — the great multitude which no man could number. — *Abbott*. The whole life of Christ, — his original glory, his coming to earth, his birth, his childhood, his mission of teaching, his marvellous works, his death on the cross, — all this sets before us a perfect example of greatness by serving others. The central figure of the world, the greatest man, the king of kings, achieved his headship by serving men more widely, more self-sacrificingly than any other being in the universe. — *P.*

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54; C. S. Robinson's *Memorial Pulpit*, "Serviceable Greatness"; *Sermons*, by G. W. Bethune, "The Dignity of Serving"; by Mark Hopkins, "Giving and Receiving"; by T. M. Post, "Missionary Sermon, A. B. C. F. M.," 1871; Butler's *Analogy*, 2 chaps. on "Rewards and Punishments."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Vers. 17-19. There are times when Christians need to go apart with the Master alone for awhile.

2. The truest heroism is in going forward in the path of duty in the face of dangers and death.

3. Jesus prepares us gradually to understand the great truths of his kingdom, and to undergo our great trials.

4. There are truths which are so large, so manifold, that it is very difficult to see how the different parts can be reconciled till we have experienced them. Such was the truth of a suffering and a victorious Saviour; a short life ended on the cross, and an everlasting kingdom of glory. So the Trinity, so election and free will.

5. Vers. 20-22. Mothers should be cautious about seeking places of honor for their sons. Doing this they seldom know what they ask. They may be seeking the ruin of their children. — *Barnes*.

6. There are a great many more Christians who kneel down in the morning, and tell the Lord what they would like him to do for them, than there are who kneel down to ask the Lord what they can do for him. — *H. C. Trumbull*.

7. There is often in men a mingling of good and of selfish motives, and the selfishness is hidden from their eyes by the gold plating of the nobler purposes.

8. When we ask for definite worldly blessings, we know not what we ask. We know so little of the future that our only wise prayer is, Thy will be done.

9. Those who would follow Christ must drink of his cup and be baptized with his baptism.

10. The only way to reach a high place in Christ's kingdom is to be fitted for it.

11. God prepares his children for the places and work he has prepared for them.

12. "Each one gets his right place at last, and the right place is the best place for him."

13. Ver. 24. The selfishness that envies those in places of honor is as bad as the selfishness that seeks the honor. The pride that looks up is as bad as the pride that looks down.

14. "That Power above who makes mankind his care,
May bless us most when he rejects our prayer!"

15. Selfish ambition is blind, socially disturbing, and unchristian. — *Meredith*.

16. Vers. 25-28. The only true ambition is that which seeks to give most and help most.

17. The desire for honor and place and power is ruinous to Christian character and the Christian church. Be not many masters.

18. Jesus Christ sets us the true example of real greatness.

19. True greatness has God for its source; self-sacrifice, its condition; service, its manifestation; and Christ as its model. — *Meredith*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The parts of this lesson follow one another in the natural order, and we can do no better than to take up the three points as already given.

SUBJECT, — TRUE AND FALSE IDEAS OF GREATNESS.

I. A SPLENDID EXAMPLE OF TRUE GREATNESS AND HEROISM (vers. 17-19). Set out this picture as vividly as you can.

Illustrations. Jesus' example still quickens to the same kind of heroism. Bunyan, going to preach at the little village of Samsell, knew a warrant was issued for his apprehension, and that his arrest would lead to imprisonment, — maybe to exile or death. He had just married a second time; one of his children was blind, — all dependent on him; but feeling he must not set the example of cowardice, he went to the chapel, was arrested, and adjudged to the imprisonment which for 12 years confined him to what he called his "Den." — *R. Glover*.

II. FALSE IDEAS OF GREATNESS (vers. 20-24).

Illustration. MINGLED MOTIVES. Dr. Bonar once had a dream that the angels took his zeal and weighed it. It was full weight, plump 100. He was much pleased. But then

they began to analyze it in various ways, and found 14 parts were selfishness; 15 parts sectarianism; 22 parts ambition; and but three parts pure love to man, and four parts love to God, etc. He was greatly concerned that but seven parts in 100 were purely good. — From *Moody*.

Illustration. YE KNOW NOT WHAT YE ASK. There is nothing in which God's love for us is more clearly shown than in his refusing to give us all that we ask for. Just look back over your own past course, and recall how you longed for some things with all your heart; and now you see that those very things would have been your ruin. A little child reaches out its hand with a cry for an open, glistening razor. It knows not what it asks for. A bright boy wants to have a cigar like his foolish father; a young man wants to drink, or gamble, or to part with his heritage of virtue, for the fun of the thing; he knows not what his longing involves. A Christian asks for health, or wealth, or ease, or exemption from trial; or for some special benefit which seems just suited to his need. He knows not what he asks. — *H. C. Trumbull*.

III. TRUE IDEAS OF GREATNESS.

Illustration. The motto on the coat of arms of the Prince of Wales is "Ich dien," *I serve*, — a most princely motto. The false king seeks the throne that all the kingdom may minister to him. Like the French king he says, "*I am the state*." The true king sits on the throne to minister to all the kingdom. To have all the rays of joy centre in us as a focus, — that is fire, the heart of sin; to be the centre from which rays emanate to all, — that is the sun, the heart of heaven. — *P*.

Illustrations. The sun is brightest when it shines brightest and farthest on others. The fire is hottest which gives most heat away. The diamond is the most precious which reflects the most rays.

LESSON XI. — MARCH 11.

CHRIST ENTERING JERUSALEM. — MATT. 21 : 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* — Ps. 118 : 26.

TIME. — Sunday forenoon, April 2, A.D. 30 (the tenth of the Jewish month Nisan). It was the first day after the Jewish Sabbath had ended, and five days before the crucifixion (Friday, April 7).

The incident recorded in vers. 12, 13, took place Monday, April 3 (Mark).

PLACE. — (1) Bethany; (2) the main road from Bethany to Jerusalem, over the Mount of Olives; (3) the temple in Jerusalem.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Mark 11 : 1-11, 15-17; Luke 19 : 29-46; John 12 : 12-16.

PRONUNCIATIONS. — Běth/ănŷ; Běth/phăĝě.

INTERVENING EVENTS. — Many interesting events took place between the last lesson and this. (1) Jesus, near Jericho, gives sight to two blind men (Matt. 20 : 29-34). (2) Zaccheus, a publican of Jericho, was converted, and Jesus lodged at his house (Luke 19 : 1-10). (3) There "he spake the parable of the pounds (Luke 19 : 11-28). (4) He left Jericho, and apparently reached Bethany on the evening of Friday, March 31 (Nisan 8). There (5) in quiet retirement he spent his last earthly Sabbath (our Saturday, April 1); and (6) in the evening, the Sabbath being over at sunset, he sat down to a festal meal provided by the sisters of Lazarus at the house of one Simon, who had been a leper (Matt. 26 : 6; John 12 : 2). (7) At this feast he was anointed by Mary (John 12 : 3); and (8) during the night a council of the Jews was convened to consider the propriety of putting, not him only, but Lazarus also, to death (John 12 : 10)."

INTRODUCTION.

We have now reached the most picturesque event of our Saviour's life. The Passover rapidly approached. The roads from all quarters were crowded with the assembling worshippers. Not only the great mass of the inhabitants of Palestine, but many foreign Jews thronged from every quarter, — from Babylon, Arabia, Egypt, from Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, probably even from Gaul and Spain. — *Milman*. The question uppermost in the

minds of them all was, "Can this Nazarene be *the* MESSIAH?" Our lesson opens with the first day of Christ's last week of earthly life, and "shows to what a pitch of expectation and enthusiasm the people were aroused."

1. And ¹when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto ²the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

2. Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me.

3. And if any *man* say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

And when they drew nigh ¹ unto Jerusalem, and came unto Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying unto them, ² Go into the village that is over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. And if any one say aught ³ unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

¹ Mark 11: 1. Luke 19: 29. ² Zech. 14: 4.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Triumphant Procession of the Prince of Peace.—Vers. 1-11. **1. And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem:** from Bethany, the Sunday morning after the supper at Bethany, held probably on Saturday evening, *i.e.*, after sunset had closed the Jewish Sabbath (John 12: 2-12). This Sunday is now called Palm Sunday. **And were come to Bethphage** (*house of figs*, or *fig-town*): a village not far from Bethany (*house of dates*), toward Jerusalem, on the southern road over the **mount of Olives**, "a hill just east of Jerusalem, so-called from the olive-trees upon it. It was about a mile from the city. It was their open ground—for pleasure, for worship; the 'Park' of Jerusalem; the thoroughfare of any going or coming in the direction of the great Jordan valley."—*Stanley*.

1, 2. Then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying, . . . Go into the village (Bethphage) over against you: and probably then in sight.—*Andrews*. Coming from Bethany by the Jericho road (toward Jerusalem), in about a quarter of an hour we come to a gorge, across which—down steep, across, and steep up again—there is, and always must have been, a foot-path for those who wish to make a short cut. But the main road curves around the end of the gorge, making a circuit, or *way round*, meeting the short cut just mentioned, very near the traditional site of Bethphage, where ruins have recently been found. The two disciples would cross the gorge by the footpath, while the main company kept the regular road.—*Prof. Isaac Hall*, in "Sunday-School Times." **Ye shall find an ass tied:** by a door without, *i.e.*, in the open street, in a place where two ways meet, which means, according to Professor Hall, the "way around" (Mark 11: 4). In the East the ass is in high esteem. Statelier, livelier, swifter than with us, it vies with the horse in favor. In contrast to the horse, which had been introduced by Solomon from Egypt, and was used especially for war, it was the symbol of peace. Every Jew, moreover, expected, from the words of one of the prophets (Zech. 9: 9), that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem riding on an ass.—*Geikie*. The rich man's ass is a lordly beast. In size he is far ahead of anything of this kind we see here at home. His coat is as smooth and glossy as a horse's. His livery is shiny black, satiny white, or sleek mouse color.—*Zincke's "Egypt."* **And a colt with her.** The other Evangelists mention the colt only, as being the one on which the Lord rode, the mother probably accompanying it.—*Cook*. Mark and Luke add *whereon never man sat*. This was probably, in their eyes, significant, as showing that he who used the colt did so in his own right, and not as filling a place which others had filled before him.—*Plumptre*. Animals not previously used for labor were accounted specially pure and fit for sacred services. Hence only oxen unused to the yoke were offered on the altar.—*Kitto*. Our Lord's birth, triumph, and burial were to be in this alike.—*Alford*.

3. If any man say aught unto you: make any objection, or ask you why you loose the ass and colt. Thus, according to Mark, "certain of those that stood there," and according to Luke, "the owners thereof," did question them when they were loosing the colt.—*Cook*. Probably a prediction, as well as a measure of prudence.—*Rev. Com.* **Ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them.** The Lord, their master and teacher, and the Lord Jehovah, whose Son and prophet he was.—*P*. The account leads to the inference that the owner of the ass was an adherent of Jesus, who had perhaps not yet declared himself. The

4. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

5. ¹Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

6. ²And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,

7. And brought the ass, and the colt, and ³put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.

8. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; ⁴others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed *them* in the way.

Now this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

Tell ye the daughter of

Zion,

Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,

Meek, and riding upon an ass,

And upon a colt the foal of an ass.

And the disciples went, and did even as Jesus appointed

them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them

their garments; and he sat thereon. And the most part

of the multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut branches from the

trees, and spread them in the

¹ Isa. 62: 11. Zech. 9: 9. John 12: 15. ² Mark 11: 4. ³ 2 Kings 9: 13. ⁴ Lev. 23: 40. John 12: 13.

number of such secret followers was probably very large. — *Cam. Bible*. And straightway he will send them: he will give permission to the disciples to take them. Jesus and his disciples had passed along this road so many times that doubtless the owners knew them well and could trust them.

4. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled. All was the carrying out of an eternal plan that an old prophet saw 600 years before. — *Thomas*. Of this divine purpose the disciples had no idea at the time (John 12: 16). — *Popular Com*. The reason for the prophecy and for the act was the same. "The time had come for Jesus to claim and receive Messianic honors. — *G. W. Clark*. Which was spoken by (or through) the prophet: Zechariah. The name of the prophet is not mentioned, the quotation being in fact a combination of two prophecies (Isa. 62: 11; Zech. 9: 9), both announcing the coming of the Saviour to Jerusalem, and both fulfilled on this occasion. — *Cook*.

5. Tell ye the daughter of Sion. Zion was that part of Jerusalem where David, and the kings after him, dwelt. Zion here represents Jerusalem and its inhabitants. — *G. W. Clark*. Spiritually it represents the people of God. Behold, thy King cometh. Jesus was the Messiah, the true king of the kingdom of God, which was now about to be established. His riding in this triumphal procession was an object lesson, a living parable, setting forth the fact that he was a king; that his kingdom was at hand; and also "the spiritual peculiarities and dignities and glory of the reign of Christ. It is a reign of peace, humility, and meekness, because of love." Meek: not warlike nor revengeful, but bringing peace and salvation. — *Jacobus*. And sitting upon an ass. His meekness and gentleness is shown by his being mounted on an animal used, not in war, but in the peaceful pursuits of life. — *G. W. Clark*. And (or even) a colt: one never used before.

6. And the disciples went: probably by the short path, as we saw above, while Jesus went with the crowd of persons going to Jerusalem by the main road.

7. Put on them their clothes: instead of a saddle, as is frequently done by the rider himself to-day; but for the people of the company to do it was an act of high and honorable regard. — *Prof. Hall*. Set him thereon. The outside of this triumph was very mean. He rode upon an ass's colt, which made no figure. This colt was borrowed. Christ went upon the water in a borrowed boat, ate the Passover in a borrowed chamber, was buried in a borrowed sepulchre, and here rode on a borrowed ass. — *Matthew Henry*. But he blessed and transfigured them all, returning them a hundredfold better than when he took them. — *P*. This is the only known instance on which Jesus rode.

8. And a very great multitude: crowds from the city (John 12: 12), and crowds of pilgrims from all parts thronging into the city by the Jericho road. By a census taken in the time of Nero it was ascertained that there were 2,700,000 Jews present at the Passover. Being visitors, they would have abundant leisure for any procession or excitement. Spread their garments in the way: thus manifesting, extemporizingly, their high idea of our Lord. It was customary, in royal processions, to spread decorative cloth, or carpet, upon the ground, that the feet of royalty might not be defiled, or that dust might not arise. — *Morison*. Others cut down branches from the trees and strewed (spread) them in the way. The idea is, that the people kept cutting down and spreading branches, twigs, or fronds. It was a simple and interesting mode of decorating the road and manifesting respect, corresponding to the scattering of flowers, which continues to be a custom in our own

9. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, ¹ Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

10. ² And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

11. And the multitude said, This is Jesus ³ the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

way. And the multitudes that went before him, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, Who is this? And the multitudes said, This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.

¹ Ps. 118: 26. ² Mark 11: 15. Luke 19: 45. John 2: 13, 15. ³ Matt. 2: 23. Luke 7: 16. John 6: 14.

and other lands. — *Morison*. The palm branches, which John mentions, are the long leaves of the date palm, often ten feet long, which to this day are a regular feature in all decorations of the country. — *Prof. Hall*.

9. **The multitudes that went before, and that followed.** Two vast streams of people met on that day. The one poured out from the city; and as they came through the gardens whose clusters of palm rose on the southeastern corner of Olivet, they cut down the long branches, as was their wont at the Feast of Tabernacles, and moved upward toward Bethany with shouts of welcome. From Bethany streamed forth the crowds who had assembled there the previous night. The two streams met midway. Half of the vast mass, turning round, preceded; the other half followed. — *Stanley*. **Hosanna** is a rendering into Greek letters of the Hebrew words, "Save, we pray" (Ps. 118: 25). It is like a shout of "Salvation! Salvation!" — *Schaff*. It is used as an expression of praise, like "Hallelujah," or "Hail." **Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.** The words are taken in part from Ps. 118: 25, 26, a hymn which belonged to the great hallelujah chanted at the end of the Paschal Supper and the Feast of Tabernacles. The people were accustomed to apply it to the Messiah. — *Godet*. Christ came in the name of the Lord, because sent and appointed by the Lord, — his ambassador, proclaiming the message of the Lord. **Hosanna in the highest:** in the highest degree, in the highest strains, in the highest heavens.

TEARS AMID THE REJOICING. As they reach the summit of the Mount of Olives the glories of Jerusalem in all its splendor burst upon Jesus' view. Here, according to Luke (19: 41), though others shouted, his own soul was full of sorrow, and he wept over the city: (1) on account of their sins; (2) because of the sorrows and desolation that were to come upon it. "He was crossing the ground on which, a generation later, the tenth Roman legion would be encamped, as part of the besieging force destined to lay all the splendor before him in ashes." Even in the midst of our rejoicing over the triumphs of Christianity, we should weep over those who will not come and be saved. — *P.*

JESUS THE PRINCE OF PEACE. The triumph on this day was the triumph of the Prince of Peace. (1) In its methods. The kingdom of Christ is one of moral influences. "Truth is his sceptre; love, his force. He not only dispenses with, but disowns, all force. Christ's kingdom has been extended to every land, and has only been hindered by the force sometimes used to extend or to secure it. Meet error with truth, injustice with honor, selfishness with love, and you will understand, by attaining, something of that meek majesty of Christ which has proved so omnipotent." — *R. Glover*. (2) In its results. Jesus has come to bring peace into all the world by righteousness. His reign will bring peace into the soul, now a troubled seat of war, into the community so often arrayed in contending factions; between nations, and everywhere; peace which passes understanding, and which flows like a river. — *P.*

10. **All the city was moved.** The word in the original is forcible, "convulsed" or "stirred" as by an earthquake, or by a violent wind.

11. **And the multitude said.** The multitude accompanying Jesus over the Mount of Olives, many of them from Galilee, answer the question asked by the people of the city. **The prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.** The well-known prophet. The accompanying crowds had most distinctly termed him the Messiah; but the less enthusiastic multitude in the city required first of all to know his name, condition, and so forth. Hence the full answer. — *Meyer*.

THE ENTHUSIASM FOR CHRIST. We are accustomed to say that this same multitude, who on Sunday shouted Hosanna, cried "Crucify him!" on the following Friday; that "the whole enthusiasm of the multitude at the end is nothing more than the last upstreaming brilliancy of an evening sun, before it vanishes beneath the horizon." But Richard Glover

12. ¹And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the ²money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

And Jesus entered into the ¹² temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of

¹ Mark 11: 11. Luke 19: 45. John 2: 15. ² Deut. 14: 25.

is doubtless nearer the truth when he says, "The whole of that enthusiasm was not excitement. If most of the gladsome voices were silenced by the cross, very few, if any of them, took up the other cry, 'Crucify him!' Doubtless many of those who sang Hosanna that day, asked at Pentecost, 'What must I do to be saved?' and were among the first believers. In times of great religious excitement all emotion is not spiritual, but much of it is good and will endure." "This story," says Dr. Robinson, "proves Christ's *fitness to evoke religious enthusiasm*. It is a frightful mistake to suppose, and a wilful perversion to assert, that Christianity as a scheme of faith is tame, insipid, and lifeless." There never has been anything on God's earth so adapted to kindle all the enthusiasm of the soul, and to make it an enduring flame. Blessed are they who have felt and continue to feel a deep, abiding, glowing enthusiasm for Christ and his Gospel. As Christ said to the Pharisees at this time (Luke 19: 40) "If these should hold their peace, the very stones would immediately cry out." Only stony or dead hearts never feel enthusiasm for Christ. — *P.*

II. Triumph over Evil Doers. — Vers. 12, 13. The action described in these verses did not take place till the next day. According to the fuller account of Mark, on the day of his triumphal entry our Lord looked round about the temple, passed out to Bethany and lodged there. The next day (Monday), on his way to Jerusalem, he pronounced the curse on the barren fig-tree (vers. 18, 19), afterwards cleansing the temple. — *Cook.*

12. And Jesus went into the temple of God. The word *temple* is used in its largest latitude, as denoting the *entire sacred enclosure*, on the central summit of which stood the Holy and Most Holy place. — *Morison.* The part cleansed by Jesus was the outer court, called the Court of the Gentiles. **And cast out.** This cleansing is not to be confounded with that recorded in John 2: 13-17 at the commencement of Christ's ministry. It is not at all strange that, scourged from the temple, they should, in less than three years, have returned again to corrupt it. History is full of parallels. The temple was cleansed but not filled by the indwelling of the Spirit of God. — *Abbott.* **All them that sold and bought in the temple.** In the court of the Gentiles was the temple market, where animals, oil, wine, and other things necessary for sacrifices and temple worship, were sold, for the convenience of pilgrims who came from all parts of the world to offer sacrifices at the Passover season, and who could not bring their victims with them. The priests made gain out of the traffic, and there was large opportunity for extortion.

Noise, confusion, wrangling, bitter words, reckless oaths, and dishonest practices filled the sacred courts where the Gentiles should have been taught the holy worship and the commandments of God. **And overthrew the tables of the money changers.** Money would be required (1) to purchase materials for offerings; (2) to present as free-offerings to the temple treasury (Mark 12: 41; Luke 21: 1); (3) to pay the yearly temple tax of half a shekel due from every Jew, however poor. All this could not be received except in a native coin called the Temple shekel, (two drachmæ pieces). — *Maclear.* The



MONEY CHANGER.

pilgrims brought with them the coinage of their own country — Syrian, Egyptian, Greek, as the case might be — and their money was either not current in Palestine, or, as being stamped with the symbols of heathen worship, could not be received into the Corban, or treasury of the temple. For their convenience, therefore, money changers were wanted. — *Ellicott.* Here again was opportunity for gain and extortion. **Seats (or stands) of them**

13. And said unto them, It is written, ¹ My house shall be called the house of prayer; ² but ye have made it a den of thieves.

14. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

15. And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased,

them that sold the doves; and ¹³ he saith unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but ye make it a den of robbers. And ¹⁴ the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. But when the ¹⁵ chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children that were crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were moved with

¹ Isa. 56: 7. ² Jer. 7: 11. Mark 11: 17.

that sold doves: required for offerings. The sale of doves appears to have been in a great measure in the hands of the priests themselves; and one of the high priests especially is said to have gained great profits from his dovescotes on Mount Olivet. — *Maclear*.

13. **It is written.** The words which our Lord quotes are a free combination of two prophetic utterances, — one from Isaiah's vision of the future glory of the temple, as visited both by Jew and Gentile (Isa. 56: 7); one from Jeremiah's condemnation of evils like in nature, if not in form, to those against which our Lord protested (Jer. 7: 11). — *Ellicott*. **My house shall be called the house of prayer.** Mark adds, continuing the quotation from Isaiah, *for all nations* (See Rev. Ver. of Mark 11: 17). The object of the temple was to be a house of worship, of communion with God, for all people. It was not built for the Jews alone, but that all men everywhere might be led to the one true God. **But ye have made it a den of thieves** (or robbers): a place like the haunts of robbers, where strangers are plundered by extortionate prices, and overreaching, instead of being led to pray to the true God. The robbery was also a moral robbery, robbing the Gentiles of the opportunity to know the true God. For (1) the poor were deterred by the extortionate prices; and (2) those who would worship were led to disbelieve in a religion which had such unprincipled followers. — *P*.

NOTE 1. The force Jesus here used was his moral power. "Jerome regards this as the most wonderful of the miracles, and supposes that a flame and starry ray darted from the eyes of the Saviour, and that the majesty of the Godhead was radiant in his countenance." — But the power was that of fearless faith, and a righteous cause, acting upon souls conscious of their guilt. "It is conscience that makes cowards of us all."

NOTE 2. This expulsion of evil from the temple was a type of God's moral cleansings: (1) Of the soul, which was made to be a temple of God, a house of prayer; (2) of the church, where everything which mars its purpose as the house of God for all people, all selfish ends, all worldly seeking, must be cast out. Before every Pentecostal revival, and multitudes of conversions, there is a cleansing of God's temple, "which temple ye are"; (3) of the redeemed world, from which everything that is evil must be cast out (Rev. 21: 27. — *P*.

III. **Triumph over Disease and Sorrow.** — Ver. 14. 14. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them: a more delightful scene, and doubtless far more congenial to the Saviour's heart. Judgment was his strange act, mercy his delight. The grandeur of his character was indeed displayed in the former scene; but it was displayed, as was useful, on its sterner side. In this there was equal moral grandeur; but it was the grandeur of graciousness and grace. — *Morison*.

NOTE 1. It is right and natural that a house of prayer should be a house of healing and of mercy. It shows God's feelings toward men; it attracts men to God.

NOTE 2. As soon as the evils are cast out of God's temples, a river of mercy flows in. Then the changed soul and the purified church abound in deeds of mercy, of healing, and of salvation.

NOTE 3. These deeds of mercy are a specimen of what Christ is ever doing through his church. Wherever a pure church is, there is kindness to the poor, healing to the sick, help for the unfortunate.

NOTE 4. Whenever God cleanses the temple of a human soul, he also heals that soul of its various evils. — *P*.

IV. **Children joining in the Triumph.** — Vers. 15, 16. 15. And when the chief priests: the heads of the twenty-four courses of the priesthood, including perhaps the high-priest Annas, and the ex-high-priest Caiaphas, president of the Sanhedrim. And scribes: leading interpreters of the law. **Saw the wonderful things:** the expulsion of crowds by

16. And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, ¹ Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

indignation, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these are saying? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea: did ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

¹ Ps. 8: 2.

one man, and his marvellous cures. And the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David. Many of those who, on the day before, had greeted the Saviour with shouts of Hosanna, would be in the temple court; and they would cheer enthusiastically with the same "Hosanna," as they saw him doing the Messiah's work, in the temple, of cleansing and healing. The shouts would echo and re-echo, as the crowds of desecrators fled before one man, as one after another blind men went to him groping, and came away seeing, and the lame who went limping, came away running and leaping. The enthusiasm was at its highest. Even the children felt the wondrous power; and having been taught at an early age to join in temple services, they now took up the strain, and shouted and sang, "Hosanna to the Son of David." — *P.* They were sore displeased: Rev. Ver., moved with indignation. Jesus was too popular. He had been interfering with their gains and with their authority, and the people approved. And now even the children had caught the infection. There was no knowing to what all this would lead. They could not endure a Messiah who should leave them out of his kingdom.

16. Hearest thou what these say? contemptuously hinting that only children call him the Messiah. — *Rev. Com.* Have ye never read? in Ps. 8:2 (Septuagint or Greek version), with which they ought to be familiar. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise. Thus the Old Testament expressly approved and praised just that which here took place; why then should they find fault? He left the scribes themselves to fill up the rest of the verse: "Thou hast prepared praise — on account of thine adversaries to bring to silence the enemy and the accuser." The Greek word here translated perfected is rendered in Gal. 6:1 restore; it is more literally, thou restorest praise. True praise of God had perished from the temple; in the mouths of these children of the temple it was being restored. So every babe is, in his innocence, a restorer of the praise of God to the earth. Compare Matt. 18:4; Mark 10:15. — *Abbott.*

NOTE. Many formal professors, since, have been displeased that children should profess to love and honor Jesus. They have opposed Sunday-schools, and opposed the praying of children, and opposed their singing to his praise, and opposed their giving their money to spread his Gospel. But Jesus loves such praise and such service. — *Barnes.*

NOTE. The church should take the best care that the children should join in the services of praise. They should arrange their services, and build their edifices, so that the children can thus have part. The older people will find that thus praise is perfected. The gospel preached in so direct and simple a manner, the doctrines stated in so clear and simple a form, that children can understand them, the services so devotional and helpful that children can be uplifted by them, will most help the largest number of people. — *P.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Land and Book, new ed. vol. 1, pp. 408-414; Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 188-191. Gen. Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur* gives a vivid description of the scenes and circumstances of this period of Christ's life; Hanna's *Passion Week*, p. 493; Pincock's *Christ our King*, "Triumphs of the King"; *Sermons* by J. C. Hare "The Coming of the King of Zion"; Dr. Arnold's *Rugby Sermons*, 3d Series, p. 75.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Vers. 1-11. Whatever of ours the Lord has need of, we should gladly yield to his service.
2. The humblest persons, the humblest things, are transfigured with glory and joy, when made the instruments of our Lord's triumph.
3. The prophecies and the promises of God are sure to be fulfilled.
4. Jesus is the King of the whole earth; but he is the Prince of Peace, his victories are by the weapons of peace.
5. This triumphal procession was a dim foreshadowing of the triumph of the Gospel;

the time is soon coming when all the world will join in the song, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

6. It is a great privilege to honor Jesus as our king and to utter his praise. Expressions of praise increase the feeling of praise.

7. It is a good thing to be enthusiastic in religious work.

8. Vers. 12, 13. It is an awfully wicked thing to profane God's temple by wicked thoughts or acts, by trifling behavior, by disorderly conduct, by inattention.

9. Before the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit there comes a cleansing of the temple of our hearts, and the spiritual temple of the church.

10. The temple of our heart should be cleansed from all sin.

11. Those who do not cleanse their hearts make them a den of thieves, stealing from God what belongs to him, and from men the example and good works due to them.

12. The true church is God's house of prayer for all peoples, classes, and conditions of men. To exclude any is robbery.

13. Those who would cleanse the Church or the community are sure to make enemies of those with whose reputation and gains they interfere.

14. Ver. 14. The house of God is the place for thoughts and deeds of mercy.

15. Wherever there is a cleansed soul, there is a soul full of mercy and helpfulness.

16. Vers. 15, 16. Jesus is well pleased with the sincere worship of children.

17. That church is wisest and best which has Jesus' love and care for the children.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

After a brief glance at the connection and intervening history, endeavor to

PICTURE OUT THIS WONDERFUL SCENE. Use the map, and the four accounts given in the four Gospels. Make the whole procession vivid, — Christ riding on the young ass; the crowds casting their garments and palm branches in the way; all shouting hosanna, and exalting the prophet as the king of Israel; all these multitudes thronging the way over the Mount of Olives; Jesus weeping over Jerusalem as he came in sight of the beautiful city; his deeds of mercy when he reached the temple; and even the children joining in the hosanna, while the Pharisees and rulers look on, gloomy and angry.

SUBJECT, — THE TRIUMPHS OF THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

I. THE PRINCE OF PEACE RIDING IN TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION (vers. 1-11).

Illustration. *They took off their own outer robes;* somewhat on the principle that actuated the heart of young Sir Walter Raleigh, when, on Queen Elizabeth coming to a miry part of the road, and hesitating for an instant how to step across, he "took off his new plush mantle, and spread it on the ground. Her majesty trod gently over the fair foot-cloth." — *Morison.*

Illustrations. Thus David was welcomed by singing and dancing women, out of all the cities of Israel, as he came back from the slaughter of the Philistines. Herodotus records that when Xerxes was passing over the bridge of the Hellespont, the way before him was strewn with branches of myrtle, while burning perfumes filled the air. Quintus Curtius tells of the scattering of flowers in the way before Alexander the Great when he entered Babylon. Monier, in our own day, saw the way of a Persian ruler strewn with roses for three miles; while glass vessels filled with sugar were broken under his horse's feet, — the sugar being symbolical of prosperity. — *Prof. Isaac Hall*, in "Sunday-School Times."

Illustration. Once, within a few years, there were as many as eighty thousand in one vast assembly, singing the national anthem of England in the presence of Queen Victoria; and it is said that the eyes of that sovereign lady were filled with emotion as she heard them. — *C. S. Robinson.*

II. THE PRINCE OF PEACE TRIUMPHS OVER EVIL MEN (vers. 12, 13).

NOTE the power of Jesus; the power of one doing right; the weakness of those in the wrong.

APPLY to the evils that need to be cleansed from the heart and from the church.

Illustration. Remember the state of the great cathedral of London, as painted in the literature of Elizabeth and James, when mules and horses laden with market produce were led through St. Paul's as a matter of every-day occurrence, and bargains were struck there, and burglaries planned, and servants hired, and profligate assignations made and kept. — *Ellicott.*

III. THE PRINCE OF PEACE TRIUMPHS OVER SORROW AND DISEASE (ver. 14). These the works that belong to the house of prayer. God is ever working them in and through cleansed hearts and cleansed churches.

IV. THE PRINCE OF PEACE AND CHILDREN'S PRAISE (vers. 15, 16).

LESSON XII.—MARCH 18.

THE SON REJECTED.—MATT. 21: 33-46.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* — JOHN 1: 11.

TIME.—Tuesday, April 4, A.D. 30. The day after the close of our last lesson. This was Christ's last great day of teaching in Jerusalem.

PLACE.—In the temple at Jerusalem.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Mark 12: 1-12; Luke 20: 9-19.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—(1) Monday night Jesus returned to Bethany with his disciples (Matt. 21: 17). (2) The next morning (Tuesday), on their return to Jerusalem, the disciples noticed that the fig-tree on which a curse had been pronounced, on Monday morning, for unfruitfulness, was withered away from its roots (Matt. 21: 20-26; Mark 11: 20-26); and from this incident Jesus taught them the power of the prayer of faith. (3) When they had come into the temple, the chief priests questioned his authority, and Jesus answered them by a question, in return, about John the Baptist (Matt. 21: 23-27), and then (4) taught them by the parable of the two sons (Matt. 21: 28-32).

Immediately after this follows the parable of to-day's lesson.

33. Hear another parable: There was a certain householder,¹ which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen,² and went into a far country:

Hear another parable: There was a man that was a householder, which planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country.

¹ Ps. 80: 9. Isa. 5: 1. Jer. 2: 21. ² Matt. 25: 14, 15.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Vineyard rented to Husbandmen. Our Privileges.—Ver. 33. There was a certain householder: master of a family, owner of property. HE REPRESENTS GOD as the creator and owner of all things, and who had a special ownership of his peculiar people. Which planted a vineyard. Our Lord draws, as was his wont, his illustration from common life and familiar objects. Palestine was emphatically a vine-growing country, and fitted, in consequence of its peculiar configuration and climate, for rearing the very finest grapes.—*Morison*. The opening words at once suggest a comparison with Isaiah (5: 1-7). No doubt our Lord here takes up the prophecy there, the more willingly building on the old foundations, that his adversaries accused him of destroying the Law. The image of the kingdom of God as a vine-stock or as a vineyard runs through the whole Old Testament (Deut. 32: 32; Ps. 80: 8-16; Isa. 5: 1-7; 27: 1-7; Jer. 2: 21; Ezek. 15: 1-6; 19: 10); and has this especial fitness, that no property was considered to yield so large a return (Cant. 8: 11, 12). None was therefore of such price and esteem. It no doubt belongs to the fitness of the image, that a vineyard does, if it is to bring forth richly, require the most diligent and never-ceasing care; that there is no season in the year in which much has not to be done in it. Virgil presses this very strongly in words not unworthy to be kept in mind by all to whom a spiritual vineyard has been committed. (See *Georg.* 2: 397-419.)—*Trench*.

THE VINEYARD represents the kingdom of God as realized (1) in the Jewish nation, (2) in the spiritual Christian church, and (3) in the individual soul. This kingdom is in each case planted by God, and is his by creation, by preservation, and by redemption.—*P*. A ministerial charge is a vineyard; so is a Sunday-school class; so is church membership; so is wealth; so is knowledge.—*R. Glover*. Every blessing of the world—the Gospel, the truths of redemption, the influences of the Spirit, natural talents, spiritual gifts, providential opportunities—is the vineyard God has given us to cultivate.—*P*. And hedged it about. The word *hedge* here denotes a fence, of whatever material made. And no doubt the great majority of fences that surrounded the Judean vineyards, if not the whole of them, would consist of walls or “dikes,” composed either exclusively of stones, or of stones and baked mud combined. Sometimes, however, for the sake of farther protection from wild beasts, thorny shrubs were added or intermingled.—*Morison*.

34. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, ¹that they might receive the fruits of it.

And when the season of the 34
fruits drew near, he sent his
servants to the husbandmen,

¹ Cant. 8: 11, 12.

THE HEDGE represents the Law and the divine institutions, which separated the Jews from the Gentiles, and was a protection against the inroads of the immorality and idolatry of the surrounding nations. Moreover, the land of Palestine itself is hedged about by the sea, the mountains, and the desert. So every one in Christ's kingdom is hedged about by his promises, by his word, by his providence, by his Spirit, by the institutions of the church. **And digged a winepress in it.** For the winepress of to-day a hollow place, usually a rock, is scooped out, considerably deeper at one end than the other. The grapes are put into this trough, and two or more persons, with naked feet and legs, descend into it, where they jump up and down, crushing the fruit as they trample on it, while to enliven their labor they often sing at the same time. The juice flows into the lower part of the excavation. . . . The place for treading out the grapes is sometimes dug in the ground, lined, probably, with a coating of stone or brick. —

Prof. Hackett, Ill. of Scripture.

And built a tower: a watchtower, sometimes built 40 or 50 feet high, and used for the watchmen who guarded the vineyard, and during the vintage as an abode for the workers and a place of recreation, and perhaps, as Abbott suggests, for storing the fruit.

THE WINEPRESS AND TOWER represent the various advantages conferred by God upon the Jewish people; the provisions made by God for the protection and prosperity of his people; all the influences God confers on us to make us fruitful, — the Bible, the Sabbath, Christian homes, the influences of the Spirit. — *P.* **And let it out to husbandmen.** It is customary in the East, as in Ireland and in other parts of Europe, for the owner to let out his estate to *husbandmen*; i.e., to tenants, who pay him an annual rent, either in money or, as apparently in this case, in kind. — *Abbott.*



TOWERS IN A VINEYARD.

THE HUSBANDMEN represent the rulers of the Jews (ver. 45); but the people as a whole, a nation or a church, are included (ver. 43). — *Schaff.* And also each person to whom God has committed powers, opportunities, and influences for the building up the kingdom of God in the world and in his own soul. — *P.* **And went into a far country:** rather, as in the Rev. Ver., *another country*. He went abroad. Luke adds, *for a long time*. The meaning is that the special manifestations of God in miracles and revelation, as in the time of Moses and the prophets, had not been made for a long time. God seemed to be away, so as to test the obedience and faithfulness of his children. "He stands aloof to give us room to grow." — *P.*

II. **The Owner sends for his Portion of the Fruits. God's Claim upon Us.** — Ver. 34. **And when the time (or season) of the fruit drew near.** He sent not before, but at the time when fruits were naturally expected.

35. ¹ And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

36. Again, he sent other servants more than the first, and they did unto them likewise.

to receive his fruits. And 35 the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other 36 servants more than the first: and they did unto them in

¹ 2 Chron. 24: 21; 36: 16. Neh. 9: 26. Matt. 5: 12; 23: 34, 37. Acts 7: 52.

THE SEASON OF FRUITS was no definite time, but whenever any good work was to be done; when enough time had elapsed for the Jews to be trained into holy obedience, and into works for the leading of other nations to God; when God had a right to expect in the nation that nobility of character, that beautiful daily life, that perfection of worship, that care for the poor, that faith and righteousness, which their divine laws and institutions were given to produce. The season of fruits with us is the time when God has a right to expect us to believe in Jesus; when good works are rightfully expected more and larger and more perfect as we go on in the Christian life; when there are special opportunities for serving God and man, special trials, special calls. — *P.* He sent his servants: that is, the prophets, and other more eminent ministers of God in his theocracy, *were sent*, being raised up at particular times, having particular missions. The patience of the householder is thus brought out and magnified, that it may set forth the yet more wonderful forbearance and long-suffering of God. — *Trench.* Every special call to love and serve God, every service at the church, every providence of God, every voice of the Holy Spirit, every season of revival, is a servant whom God sends to us for the fruits that are due him. — *P.* That they might receive the fruits of it: the householder's share, as his stipulated rent for the use of the vineyard. — "It is the system known in India at this day as *ryot rent*; the cultivator undertakes to give the owner a certain fixed quantity yearly from the produce of the farm, and all that is over belongs to himself." — *Arnot.*

THE RENT. The fruits were obedience, love, righteous living, teaching the true God to the nations, etc. — *Olshausen.* We have always to pay rent for every privilege. For their land the Jews must pay the rent of national purity, justice, patriotism; for their spiritual privileges, the rent of faith and obedience; for office, the rent of service to God and man. Every one has some vineyard which he is to work, not exclusively for his own pleasure, profit, or honor, but for the furtherance of God's cause. . . . From every such vineyard — as pastoral charge, Sunday-school class, office in the church, church membership — we may extract that which will enrich ourselves. For every such vineyard we must pay a rent to God. And when we do, we shall find that no part of the produce pays ourselves so well as that we pay to him. — *R. Glover.* For the privileges and blessings God has bestowed upon us, both natural and spiritual, especially for the blessings of the Gospel, God has a right to expect from us all the fruits of the spirit, — consecration, holy lives, labors and gifts for the salvation of men. — *P.*

III. THE TREATMENT OF THE MESSENGERS. THE REJECTION OF CHRIST. — Vers. 35-39. 35. Took his servants, and beat one. The gradual growth of the outrage is more clearly traced in Mark. (1) The first servant they "*caught, beat, and sent away empty*"; (2) at the second they "*cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled*"; (3) they killed others in various ways. Killed another, and stoned another. Some of the prophets were not merely maltreated, but actually put to death. Thus, if we may trust Jewish tradition, Jeremiah was stoned by the exiles in Egypt, Isaiah sawn asunder by King Manasseh; and, for an ample historical justification of this description, see Jer., chaps. 37, 38; 1 Kings 18: 13; 22: 24-27; 2 Kings 6: 31; 21: 16; 2 Chron. 24: 16-22; 36: 16; and also Acts 7: 52; and the whole passage finds a parallel in the words of the apostle (Heb. 11: 36). — *Trench.*

36. He sent other servants. The patience of the householder under these extraordinary provocations is wonderful. — *Trench.*

REJECTING THE MESSENGERS. The conduct of the "lord of the vineyard" is a vivid representation of God's dealings with man. It is a faithful picture of his merciful dealings with the Jewish church. It is a no less faithful picture of his gracious treatment of the Gentile churches. They have repeatedly tried him by false doctrines, superstitions, and contempt of his word. Yet he has repeatedly granted them seasons of refreshing, raised up for them holy ministers and mighty reformers, and not cut them off, notwithstanding all their persecutions. We have probably little idea of the extent of our obligations, and of the number of gracious messages which the lord of the vineyard is constantly sending to our souls. Mercies before conversion, mercies after conversion, mercies at every step of their journey on

37. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

38. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, ¹This is the heir; ²come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

39. ³And they caught him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*.

like manner. But afterward ³⁷ he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But the husband-³⁸ men, when they saw the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance. And they took him, and cast ³⁹ him forth out of the vine-

¹ Ps. 2: 8. Heb. 1: 2.

² Ps. 2: 2. Matt. 26: 3; 27: 1. John 11: 53. Luke 22: 54. John 18: 12.

Acts 4: 27.

³ Mark 14: 46.

earth, will be revealed to the minds of saved saints, and make them ashamed of their own thanklessness. — *Ryle*. The behavior of these husbandmen is only a picture of the way impenitent men still treat God's messengers of mercy, — the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the influences of religion, — rejecting and sending them away empty. — *P*.

37. But last of all he sent unto them his son. It is only by placing together the three accounts that we can understand the full beauty and power of this passage. "Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he said, I will send my beloved son. He sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son." This was the last and crowning effort of divine mercy; after which, on the one side, all the resources even of heavenly love are exhausted, on the other the measure of sins is perfectly filled up. — *Trench*. It is evident from this that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the one especial Son of God. They will reverence my son. This implies (1) no ignorance of what would be, but is the expression of God's desire that all men be saved. (2) It implies the freedom of the will of man, and his responsibility for his choices and actions.

GOD SENDS HIS SON. We should dwell on the infinite greatness and preciousness of this expression of God's desire that all men should be saved. (1) It is the highest possible expression of God's love for man, the Almighty Creator sending his beloved Son from the highest heaven to this smallest corner of his universe to save sinful men. (2) In Jesus, his Son, are the highest possible powers that can work together for the salvation of man, — the forgiveness of sin, the light of truth about God and immortality, the strongest motives, — hope, fear, love, duty, — the influences of the life-giving Spirit, a perfect example. — *P*.

38. The husbandmen . . . said among themselves, This is the heir. Christ is the heir of all things (Heb. 1: 2). The whole world is to be his inheritance, and will become his in reality when all the kingdoms of earth become his kingdom, and all hearts accept him as king. — *P*. Did the Jewish rulers know they were putting to death the heir, the Son of God? (1) They were plainly told, and ought to have known. (2) In all probability the truth did more than once flash upon them. (3) The final resolution to kill him was taken immediately after his greatest exhibition of divine power in the raising of Lazarus (John 11: 46-53). — *Stock*. Let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. A sort of faith in the greatness of Christ is at the root of the intense hatred men feel toward him. . . . They know him to be the *Heir*, feel Christ's divine right to rule them, that he is man's best teacher, highest example, rightful Lord; and yet this knowledge increases opposition. Lord Byron said of the Gospel, whose guidance he would not accept, "The worst of it is, I believe it." — *R. Glover*. If Jesus was the Messiah, and he was introducing the kingdom of God, whose whole spirit was so different from theirs, then they would lose their places as rulers, as teachers, as men of influence, their authority over the people, and their chief business. They were so connected with a system, and with wrong ideas and principles and customs, which must pass away with Christ's reign, that if Christ prevailed, they must fall. But they imagined that, if they could destroy Christ, they could continue in possession of the inheritance, be rulers over Israel, teachers and leaders of the people, the possessors of the nation. As referring to the vineyard of our own souls, it is the determination not to be ruled by Christ, but to be our own king, and hold possession of ourselves to do as we please. — *P*.

39. And they caught him. From history Jesus now turns to prophecy. Cast him out of the vineyard. This may involve an allusion to Christ suffering "without the gate" (Heb. 13: 12, 13; John 19: 17). And slew him: on the cross of Calvary. They killed that they might possess; but it was the shortest road to entire loss. Those who reject Christ in order that they may keep possession of themselves, their pleasures and hopes, have taken the shortest and surest way to lose them. — *P*.

40. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41. ¹They say unto him, ²He will miserably destroy those wicked men, ³and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42. Jesus saith unto them, ⁴Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

yard, and killed him. When 40 therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will 41 miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, 42 Did ye never read in the scriptures,

The stone which the builders rejected,
The same was made the head of the corner:

¹ Luke 20: 16.

² Luke 21: 24. Heb. 2: 3.

³ Acts 13: 46; 15: 7. Rom. 9: 10, 11.

⁴ Ps. 118: 22.

Isa. 28: 16. Mark 12: 10. Luke 20: 17. Eph. 2: 20.

IV. **The Punishment of the Rejectors of Christ.** — Vers. 40-46. 40. **When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh.** When the time comes for God to take open notice of this rejection, and to make a settlement with the nation. **What will he do unto those husbandmen?** Every possible method of leading them to right conduct had been exhausted. God does all that it is possible for love to do to save us, and then nothing is left but perdition. If the love of God, shown in sending his Son Christ Jesus to save us, if all that was done for us on the cross, will not touch our hearts and make us choose God, then nothing will. The last hope is gone when we reject Christ. — *P.*

41. **They say unto him.** That is, some of the chief priests and elders (ver. 27), who did not quite comprehend the application of the parable to themselves. **He will miserably destroy those wicked (miserable) men,** etc. In the Greek, *miserably* and *wicked* are connected words, and the order of the sentence is very emphatic: thus, "The wretches! wretchedly he will destroy them." — *Stock.* There was nothing else to do. It was a simple matter of justice. And yet the justice was so terrible that the *people*, who seem first to have caught a glimpse of Jesus' meaning, cried out *God forbid*, when they saw their rulers thus condemning themselves (Luke 20: 16).

42. **Did ye never read in the Scriptures.** Referring them to Ps. 118: 22, 23, — a psalm which the Jews applied to the Messiah. Peter twice applied it to him (Acts 4: 11; 1 Pet. 2: 7). In the primary meaning of the psalm the illustration seems to have been drawn from one of the stones, quarried, hewn, and marked, away from the site of the temple, which the builders, ignorant of the head architect's plans, or finding on it no mark (such as recent explorations in Jerusalem have shown to have been placed on the stones of Solomon's Temple in the place where they were quarried, to indicate their position in the future structure of the fabric), had put on one side as having no place in the building, but which was found afterwards to be that on which the completeness of the structure depended, — on which, as the chief corner-stone, the two walls met and were bonded together. — *Plumptre.* **The stone.** The stone is the *whole kingdom and power of the Messiah summed up in himself.* — *Alford.* **The builders rejected.** The builders answer to the husbandmen: they were appointed of God to carry up the spiritual building, as these to cultivate the spiritual vineyard. The rejection of the chief corner-stone answers exactly to the denying and murdering the heir. — *Trench.* **Become the head of the corner.** Referring *not* to the highest point or coping of the wall, but to the corner-stone, laid at the foundation, binding together the two walls; on it the whole superstructure, in a measure, rests. There are four corner-stones, but in large buildings one is generally laid with ceremony, as the first step in the true structure of the edifice. Christ is declared elsewhere in the New Testament to be the corner-stone of his church (See Acts 4: 11; 1 Cor. 3: 11; 1 Pet. 2: 6, 7). — *Abbott.* A reference to the union of Jews and Gentiles in Christ, as in Eph. 2: 19-22, may be included (so *Alford*); but the main thought is that the Messiah, even if rejected by the "builders," should become the corner-stone of the real temple of God (his new spiritual kingdom). — *Schaff.* Every temple that is to stand, be it nation or church or individual soul, must have Christ for the corner-stone, or it will perish. For the time is coming when Jesus shall be king of all in heaven and on earth. — *P.* **This.** That is, this strange exaltation of the despised to be chief of all. **Is the Lord's doing.** (Or, as in the Revised, *This was from the Lord.*) **And it is marvellous in our eyes.** It is one of the Lord's wonderful ways of working, and will come to pass because God rules and controls *all things.* — *Geikie.* The superstructure also is largely made up of stones rejected by the world's builders. Compare Acts 4: 13; 1 Cor. 1: 26, 27. — *Abbott.*

43. Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

44. And ¹whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken : but on whomsoever it shall fall, ²it will grind him to powder.

45. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

46. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because ³they took him for a prophet.

This was from the Lord, And it is marvellous in our eyes?

Therefore say I unto you, ⁴³The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And he that falleth on ⁴⁴this stone shall be broken to pieces: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust. And when the chief ⁴⁵priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. And when they sought to lay ⁴⁶hold on him, they feared the multitudes, because they took him for a prophet.

¹ Isa. 8: 14; 15. Zech. 12: 3. Rom. 9: 33. 1 Pet. 2: 8. ² Isa. 60: 12. Dan. 2: 44. ³ Luke 7: 16. John 7: 40.

43. **The kingdom of God shall be taken from you.** The Jews might have been, had they accepted Christ, the centre of the kingdom of God on earth; but, rejecting him, their polity was destroyed, their temple razed to the ground, their capital laid waste by the Romans, about forty years after this. **And given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.** Expressed by the apostle when he said, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13: 46). The nation was the Christian church which Christ ordained for his kingdom. And, if we will not serve God, he will find those who will use their wealth and privileges for his kingdom and the advancement of all good. The righteous shall inherit the earth; and, if we refuse to be righteous, we cannot inherit. — *P.*

44. **And whosoever shall fall on this stone, etc.** They fall on the stone who are offended at Christ in his low estate (Isa. 8: 14; 53: 2; Luke 2: 34; 4: 29; John 4: 44); of this sin his hearers were already guilty. They on whom the stone falls are those who set themselves in self-conscious opposition against the Lord; who, knowing what he is, do yet to the end oppose themselves to him and to his kingdom. These shall not merely fall and be broken; for one might recover himself, though with some present harm, from such a fall as this; but on them the stone shall fall as from heaven, and shall grind them to powder. — *Trench.* The former clause of the verse describes the penal consequences of unbelief during the day of probation (to those who stumble over certain difficulties about Christ), the latter, the punishment of the finally impenitent. — *Morison.*

45. **Perceived that he spake of them.** They at last saw the application of the parable, and immediately went out unconsciously to fulfil it.

46. **They feared the multitude:** who had come from other parts of Palestine, and from other countries, and who were more free from prejudice, and had little at stake. He was an especial friend of many of the Galileans, whom he had taught and healed.

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PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Vers. 33, 34. God has given each of us a vineyard to take care of for him.
2. This vineyard is all in perfect order for producing the fruits of righteousness.
3. The greatest privilege one can enjoy is to have the kingdom of God entrusted to him. — *Taylor.*
4. God has done all that can wisely be done for us to make us good.
5. God has a right to good fruit from these vineyards.
6. "These claims of God are the glory of man. And it is more for *our* sake than his own that God sends for fruit."
7. God's messengers are (1) calls to repentance, (2) Sabbaths, (3) Bibles, (4) the Holy

Spirit, (5) opportunities to do good, (6) occasions for obeying his commands, (7) all his mercies, deserving obedience and love.

8. Ver. 35. Who so acts as "the servant" will always be deemed obtrusive and assuming by those who are unwilling to yield up the fruits.

9. It is wilful selfishness, which wants to enjoy the benefits of a privilege without the burden of responsibility. — *Glover*.

10. Ver. 37. The highest possible proof of God's desire to save us is the sending his Son.

11. If we reject him, there are no means left whereby we can be brought to salvation.

12. Ver. 38. Men imagine that if they reject Jesus as their Master, they can be their own masters; but instead, they come to ruin and death.

13. The greatest sin a man can commit is to reject Christ. — *Taylor*.

14. Ver. 41. The penalty of neglecting or misusing a privilege is the withdrawal of the privilege.

15. The greatest judgment which can befall a people is the taking away the kingdom of God from them. They are sure to perish.

16. Men's actions and lives and words condemn themselves in sinning against God. "Ye are witnesses against yourselves."

17. Ver. 42. The great corner-stones in all world-famous causes, have been stones which the builders rejected, *e.g.*, unpopular principles, unwelcome truths, unconventional, but consecrated men. — *Glover*. But the fact that a stone is rejected does not make it a corner-stone.

18. Ver. 44. Whatever men may do, Jesus and his kingdom are sure of success.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

A BRIEF REVIEW of the last lesson and its circumstances.

TRACE ON THE MAP the course of Jesus and the events that took place between the last lesson and this, thus coming to the CIRCUMSTANCES in which the parable was spoken.

SUBJECT, — WHAT GOD DOES FOR MAN, AND MAN'S TREATMENT OF GOD.

I. THE VINEYARD, — WHAT GOD DOES FOR US (ver. 33). COMPARE with Isa. 5 : 1-7. Give a vivid PICTURE of the vineyards of the olden time, and the circumstances referred to in the parable.

APPLY to the present time, and show how much God has entrusted to us, how marvellous are our privileges. There is less need of other ILLUSTRATIONS here, because the whole lesson is a series of illustrations.

II. THE FRUITS, — THE CLAIMS OF GOD UPON US (ver. 34). SHOW the right of the householder to fruits, and God's right over us; and what are the fruits he claims from us.

III. THE MESSENGERS, — THE CALLS OF GOD FOR HIS DUES (vers. 34, 37). In what ways God calls for the fruit we should bear for him.

IV. THE REJECTION OF THOSE SENT (vers. 35-39). Show clearly how we reject God's messengers, and the danger of rejecting the Son, because God's love and goodness can go no further for our salvation.

Illustrations. The means used to keep one from falling over a precipice, — the line of the path (natural law); the notice, forbidding to go any nearer (the moral law); police guards warning of danger (teachers, the Bible); a hedge (lesser sufferings for sin); a strong fence (the love of God in Jesus Christ). Whosoever goes beyond this is beyond help.

V. THE PUNISHMENT (vers. 40-46). Show that God has first done all he can to make men good, and when they refuse there is but one thing left — punishment.

Illustration. THE REJECTED STONE. It is said, that, when Solomon's Temple was building, all the stones were brought from the quarry ready cut and fashioned, and there were marked on all the blocks the places where they were to be put. Amongst the stones was a very curious one; it seemed of no describable shape; it appeared unfit for any portion of the building. They tried it at this wall, but it would not fit; they tried it in another, but it could not be accommodated: so, vexed and angry, they threw it away. The temple was so many years building, that this stone became covered with moss, and grass grew around it. Everybody passing by laughed at the stone. They said Solomon was wise, and doubtless all the other stones were right; but, as for that block, they might as well send it back to the quarry; for it was quite sure it was meant for nothing. Year after year rolled on, and the poor stone was still despised. The eventful day came when the temple was to be finished and opened, and the multitude was assembled to the grand sight. The builders said, "Where

is the top-stone?" "Where is the pinnacle?" They little thought where the crowning marble was, until some said, "Perhaps that stone which the builders refused is meant to be the top-stone." They then took it, and hoisted it to the top of the house; and as it reached the summit they found it well adapted to the place. Loud hosannas made the welkin ring, as the stone which the builders refused thus became the head-stone of the corner. So it is with Christ Jesus.—*Spurgeon*.

LESSON XIII.—MARCH 25.

REVIEW.—MISSIONS.—TEMPERANCE.

REVIEW AND MISSIONS.—PSALMS 2: 1-12.

The lesson, appointed by the Committee, for *Missions*, will easily apply to the *Review* of the Quarter's lessons. The subject of the first Quarter's lessons in *Matthew*, was *The coming of the kingdom*; of the second, *The unfolding of the principles of the kingdom*. In this quarter, the third on *Matthew*, we have for our

SUBJECT.—OPPOSITION TO THE KINGDOM OVERCOME.

TIME.—One year,—from the first of April A.D. 29, to the first of April A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Galilee; Sea of Galilee; regions of Tyre and Sidon; Mount Hermon; Perea; Jericho; Jerusalem; Mount of Olives.

JESUS.—About 32½ to 33½ years old. The last year of his ministry.

PSALM II.—Written by David, between 1065 and 1015 B.C. It is the *Psalm of Messiah the Prince*, with an application first to David himself, and then to David's Greater Son. It is a *fourfold picture*, being composed of four stanzas of three verses each.

I. OPPOSITION TO THE KINGDOM (Ps. 2: 1-3). Of Herod (Lesson I.); of poverty and need (Lesson II.); of natural forces (Lesson III.); of disease (Lessons II., IV.); of offences, hindrances (Lesson VII.); of worldliness (Lesson IX.); of ambitions and evils within the church (Lessons X., XI.); of rejectors of Christ (Lesson XII.).

APPLICATION TO MISSIONS. The opposition which the Gospel has to overcome,—from rulers; from poverty; from dangers; from the sins, social customs, degraded state of the heathen; from the natural depravity of the heart; from selfishness; from persecution. Also from imperfections and worldliness in the church itself.

II. THE POWER OF CHRIST TO OVERCOME (Ps. 2: 4-6). The power of martyr courage and faithfulness (Lesson I.); to supply men's needs (Lesson II.); over nature (Lesson III.); over disease (Lesson IV.); in finding the lost (Lesson VII.); over evil men (Lesson XI.), and evil deeds (Lesson XI.); the power of the rejected stone.

APPLICATION TO MISSIONS. The power of Jesus to overcome all the oppositions to the Gospel; the power shown in the effects of missions on the heathen; their reflex influence on the church; the great growth of benevolence; of Christian activity at home; the marvellous progress of the Gospel abroad.

III. THE MEANS BY WHICH HE OVERCOMES (Ps. 2: 7-9). By his disciples (Lesson V.); by his own sufferings and death (Lessons V., VI., X.); by the children, and the childlike spirit (Lesson VII.); by seeking the lost sheep (Lesson VII.); by forgiveness (Lesson VIII.); by choice (Lesson IX.); by service (Lesson X.); by conferring privileges (Lesson XII.).

APPLICATION TO MISSIONS. Jesus brings the heathen to the Gospel by his atonement; by forgiveness; by giving the childlike spirit; by inspiring his disciples to give and to work: by sending out his disciples; by the word of God through living men.

IV. FOREGLEAMS OF TRIUMPH (Ps. 2: 10-12). The glory of Christ (Lesson VI.); riding in triumph (Lesson XI.).

APPLICATION TO MISSIONS. Everywhere are the dawning rays shining on the mountain tops, and sometimes down toward the valleys. There are missions where we have foregleams of the millenium; there are workers and givers who foreshadow the transfigured world.

TEMPERANCE.

THE TWO FOUNTAINS.—GAL. 5: 16-26.

TIME.—The Epistle to the Galatians was written probably at the close of A.D. 57 or early in 58, during Paul's "Wintering," at Corinth.

PLACE. — It was written probably at Corinth, but Lightfoot suggests that it was on the voyage from Macedonia to Corinth. It was written to the churches in Galatia, not a city, but a province in Asia Minor.

AUTHOR. — St. Paul, aged about 56. On his Third Missionary Journey.

PLACE IN BIBLE HISTORY. — Acts 20: 2, 3.

LIGHT ON THE LESSON. I. The Spirit versus the Flesh. — Vers. 16-18. **Walk** (conduct yourselves) **in the Spirit.** By the rule of the Spirit, as the Spirit directs, under the influence of the Holy Spirit. **The lust** (or desires) **of the flesh:** that is, the evil impulses which have their seat in the body. The body as such is not regarded as evil, for Paul himself calls it the temple of the Holy Ghost. But the body is the seat of many desires and impulses which, when supreme and allowed to control the reason and the conscience, instead of being subject to them, become the source of evil.

17. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit. The two are antagonistic. Each seeks to control the man, and be supreme. One or the other rules in every soul. And what a man is depends on whether he exalts as his highest object of obedience the lusts of the flesh, or the holy impulses of the Spirit. Whether sensual or spiritual things rule in his soul.

II. The Works of the Flesh. — Vers. 19-21. **19. Now the works of the flesh:** the works which are done when the man exalts the flesh and its desires to a controlling influence.

The works of the flesh here named are seventeen in number.

NOTE 1. They proceed from a wrong heart. They are streams which flow from an impure fountain. They are the fruit of exalting the body over the spirit. We cannot gather figs from thorns nor grapes from thistles.

NOTE 2. They are social. No one of them exists alone. Where one flourishes, others are likely to flourish.

NOTE 3. The seeds or possibilities of all these sins are in every person. Many of them may lie dormant for a time; many may never come into actual life; but the tendencies to all are in every person; and under favoring circumstances, away from restraints, and unconquered, they will appear in the life and character.

NOTE 4. These works of the flesh are diametrically opposed to the principles of God's Kingdom, the principles which make Heaven the holy and happy place it is. Therefore those who do these evil works cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. This is not an arbitrary prohibition, but is a necessity from the nature of the case.

NOTE 5. Every one of these evils is promoted and encouraged by the use of intoxicating liquors. Intemperance excites every evil passion, arouses wrath and hatred, leads to murders, is the friend of revellings. Intemperance is a work of the flesh. It exalts the flesh above the Spirit. It is the fountain of numberless evil deeds. It weakens the will. Statistics show that a large portion of the crime of the world is connected with intemperance. The *London Times* said: "The use of strong drink produces more idleness, crime, want, and misery than all other causes put together."

III. The Fruits of the Spirit. — Vers. 22-26. Nine fruits of the Spirit are named here. They are called fruits of the Spirit: (1) because they are the qualities which are planted by the Holy Spirit, and thrive under his influences; (2) because they are the result of exalting the spirit over the body, making reason and conscience rulers over the sensual tendencies of the body.

NOTE 1. The Holy Spirit gives us the new heart which is the fountain and source of all good deeds and words. A new heart is the first need of man.

NOTE 2. These fruits of the Spirit are social. They like to go together. Wherever you find one you will find others. Each one strengthens the others.

NOTE 3. They all tend to make the possessor happy and useful. They make religion attractive. They ennoble the character. They exalt the whole man.

NOTE 4. These are the qualities which make heaven. They are the principles which prevail in heaven. Only by cherishing these qualities can we belong to the kingdom of heaven.

NOTE 5. They are equally good for earth, and will bring the heavenly atmosphere to earth. The prevalence of these fruits means the coming of the millenium.

NOTE 6. *Temperance* promotes all these qualities. It encourages every good.

NOTE 7. The way to keep out intemperance is to fill the soul and the community full of these good fruits. They drive out the works of the flesh as the light scatters the darkness. Fill the soul full of good and there is no room for the evil.

NOTE 8. Christ and his religion plant these fruits in our hearts, bring us the power which cherishes them, furnish the motives which enables us to practice them, give us the victory over the temptations to do the works of the flesh.



BETHANY.

TOWER OF ANTONIA

MOUNT OF OLIVES



SECOND QUARTER.

From April 1 to June 24, 1888.

Studies in Matthew.

LESSON I. — APRIL 1.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST. — MATT. 22 : 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.* — REV. 19 : 9.

TIME. — Spring of A.D. 30. Passion week, Tuesday, April 4, three days before the crucifixion. This was the last day of Christ's public ministry.

PLACE. — The temple at Jerusalem.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea; Herod Antipas, of Galilee; Herod Philip, other parts.

JESUS. — About 33½ years old; at the close of his three and one-half years' ministry.

COMPARE this parable with a somewhat similar one spoken on another occasion (Luke 14 : 16-24).

INTRODUCTION.

In the last regular lesson of the first quarter, Jesus was spending the last day of his public ministry in the temple, teaching, especially by parables. To-day we find him in the same place, and study a parable spoken soon after the one we last studied; and recorded by Matthew only.

1. And Jesus answered ¹ and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

2. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

And Jesus answered and ¹ spake again in parables unto them, saying, The kingdom of ² heaven is likened unto a certain king, which made a mar-

¹ Luke 14 : 16. Rev. 19 : 7, 9.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Wedding Feast. — Vers. 1, 2. And Jesus answered. Not to anything that had been said, so far as we know, but to the feelings and wishes (21 : 45) which he knew were entertained. — *Broadus.* Spake unto them again by parables: of which this is the only one recorded. Or, the plural points merely to the *kind of discourse*, in a parabolic way, by means of parables.

THE TEACHING OF PARABLES was (1) partly to conceal the application of the truth until it should gain their concurrence, as Nathan's to David, and as in the parable of the two sons (chap. 21 : 31); and (2) partly to represent the truth in pictures, calculated to interest and impress. **And said.** This parable may be described as a drama in three acts. — *Wm. M. Taylor.*

2. The kingdom of heaven. The new order of things which Jesus had come to establish upon the earth, in which, as king, ruling over the hearts of men, he would thus direct their lives according to those principles of love and righteousness which govern the saints and angels in heaven, and which, if universally obeyed, would make a heaven of earth. — *P.*

3. And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding : and they would not come.

4. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, ¹ Behold, I have prepared my

riage feast for his son, and ³ sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage feast : and they would not come. Again he sent forth ⁴ other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, Behold,

¹ Prov. 9 : 2.

THE KING. Is like unto a certain king. Representing God the Father, the King of saints, who forms the kingdom, makes its laws, governs it, defends it, all for the good of the subjects, in whose prosperity and happiness and noble living is found the king's glory.

THE WEDDING FEAST. Which made a marriage : *i.e.*, marriage feast. The word in Greek is in the plural, to express "the several parts or stages" of the festival. "Compare our word *nuptials*." — *Broadus*. For "the wedding festivities in the East are often protracted for several days, sometimes for an entire week or more (Gen. 29 : 27 ; Judg. 14 : 12)." — *Abbott*

THE BRIDEGROOM. For his son. Jesus the Christ who loves THE BRIDE, his church, woos her, makes her his own, takes her to his home to abide in unspeakable love and joy forever. — *P*. The church as an ideal whole is the bride ; the individual believers are the true guests. — *Riddle*.

THE GOSPEL IS A WEDDING FEAST. It is *the marriage supper of the Lamb* (Rev. 19 : 9). It represents *the abundance of bliss, which the Royal Father has provided for sinners, in consideration of their very peculiar and endearing relation to his Son*. Its fulness is in heaven. It is only its foretaste, its antepast, that can be enjoyed on earth. — *Morison*. 1. It is compared to a *feast* to express the abundance, the joyousness, the social pleasures, the satisfaction of every want, the variety, "the feast of reason and the flow of soul," found in the religious life (Isa. 25 : 6 ; 65 : 13). 2. It is compared to a *wedding* feast to express the intimate fellowship with God, the mutual love and delight in one another, the protecting care on the one hand and perfect trust on the other, the unity of purpose, of character, of hope, the abiding forever in one perfect home, which belong to the union of Christ with believers (Isa. 61 : 10 ; 62 : 5 ; Hos. 2 : 19 ; Matt. 9 : 15 ; John 3 : 29 ; Eph. 5 : 31, 32). 3. It is the marriage feast of a *king's son* to express all these things in the highest conceivable degree. — *P*.

II. The Invited Guests. — Vers. 3, 4. 3. And sent forth his servants. Such, namely, as were denominated among the Romans "inviters" (*invitatores*) or "callers" (*vocatores*). — *Morison*. It is still customary in the East not only to give an invitation some time beforehand, but to send round servants at the proper time to inform the invited guests that all things are ready. — *Kitto*. This notification was easy because "the guests were close together in an Eastern city," and necessary, because "they were not generally supplied with time-pieces." — *Broadus*. The second "callers" are not merely to invite to, they are to *commend* the feast, with a view to create desire. — *Bruce*.

THE SERVANTS, "the inviters," represented all God's inspired messengers. Moses, the prophets, but more especially John the Baptist and the apostles, who were summoning the Jews to the King's son, who had now come, and to the founding of the new kingdom which was now at hand. The first invitation had long been given, even at the very birth of the nation ; and all their long training, their laws, their institutions, were the announcement that they were bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And to-day God's preachers and teachers, the Word, the Holy Spirit, God's providence, the institutions of religion, are the "inviters" sent forth to summon those who are bidden. "And whosoever heareth, let him say, Come." — *P*. **To call them that were bidden.** Those who had previously received the invitation, and had had abundant opportunity to make all necessary preparations.

THE GUESTS were the Jews, the whole Jewish nation, who had been called of God as his peculiar people, and chosen out from all the nations. In our day the *guests* represent all who have been brought up in Christian families, who have been trained in church and Sabbath-school, and in the study of God's Word. They have long been called ; and they are again and again invited to the Gospel feast. "Now is the accepted time." — *P*. **And they would not come.** They did not choose to come. Infatuated men ! Not come to a feast ? to a marriage feast ? to be the guests of the king and his son ? Are they demented ? Yes ; morally demented. A moral mania has taken possession of them. — *Morison*. Men will not come to Christ because of their wicked hearts. — *Jacobus*.

4. Again, he sent forth other servants. A plainer and fuller message, a continued repetition of the invitation. Here is "a testimony to the long-suffering and patience of God

dinner: my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage.

5. But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

6. And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*.

I have made ready my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come to the marriage feast. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise: and the rest laid hold on his servants, and entreated them shamefully, and killed

in repeating and re-repeating the Gospel message." — *Abbott*. God makes every possible effort, with tireless patience, to bring men to the Gospel. **Behold I have prepared my dinner.** The original word (*ariston*) designates not the chief meal of the day, but the lesser meal, a breakfast, or lunch, usually taken between 9 and 12 o'clock; "the wedding breakfast with which the series of meals connected with the marriage was to begin." — *Meyer*. "This will give even greater precision to the meaning of the parable as applying to these preparatory foretastes of the great feast which the church of God now enjoys." — *Alford*. **My oxen** (beeves) **and my fatlings.** Smaller animals, as lambs, calves, specially fed for the occasion. Probably there is a figurative allusion to the slaying of the sacrifice as meat for the feast. This thought of Christ as slain is necessarily included when a distinctly evangelical sense is put upon the phrase, All things are ready. — *Schaff*. Only when Christ was crucified on Calvary were all things fully ready. **And all things are ready.** The fulness of time had now come. The long preparations for the Gospel were completed; the fore-runner had done his work; Jesus himself had come from heaven, and had taught the Jews the divine message, and even now he was uttering his last words. Within three days he would consummate his atonement on the cross. **Come unto the marriage.** The king graciously assumes that these guests deferred their coming through some misunderstanding, unaware, perhaps, that all the preparations were completed; and, instead of threatening and punishing, only bids the servants whom he now sends, to press the message with greater instance and distinctness than before. See Peter's word at Pentecost (Acts 3: 17). — *Trench*.

III. The Invitation rejected. — Vers. 5, 6. We find in this parable *Four ways of treating the Gospel message*. The **FIRST WAY** is to accept it, as we see later on. The **SECOND WAY** is that of hypocritical insolence, as seen in vers. 11, 12. The **THIRD WAY** is that of neglect and indifference (ver. 5).

5. **But they made light of it.** The original expression simply denotes that *they gave themselves no concern.* — *Morison*. **And went their ways.** As if there were nothing to call them elsewhere. **One to his farm.** His *own* farm, as in Rev. Ver. Note the pronoun *own* before *field*. A contrast lurks in it. It was his own concerns, and not the gratification or honor of his sovereign, in which he was interested. — *Morison*. **Another to his merchandise:** his business. One was absorbed by his *possession*, the other by his *getting*. — *Abbott*. The first is the landed proprietor, the second the merchant. The first would *enjoy* what he already possesses, the second would *acquire* what as yet is his only in anticipation. — *Trench*. It was worldliness, a selfish heart, an absorption in lower things, that kept the Jews from accepting Christ.

EXCUSES. For the excuses which were rendered, see the similar parable in Luke 14: 18-20. Note (1) some of the excuses which men now make, — their business, pleasure, time enough yet, faults of church members, opposition of friends, so many sects, hard doctrines, God too good to punish. (2) Their abrupt refusal at the eleventh hour, after all was ready to receive them, partook of the nature both of breach of engagement and disloyalty. — *Arnol*. So now the neglect of the Gospel invitations is disloyalty to God, who has done so much for us, and insulting to his kindness and love. "He who ignores me altogether does thereby say, in effect, that I am not worthy of his notice; and I feel that to be a greater contempt of me than if he sought to treat me with violence." — *Taylor*. Therefore (3) those who neglect are no safer than those who violently oppose. Those who float on the rapids will as certainly go over the falls as those who row toward them. (4) None of the excuses men make are of any value. There is not one they will dare to offer on the judgment day. (5) It is very strange that any wish to be excused. Excused from what? From God, from heaven, from glory, from happiness, from immortality, from the noblest life possible to man. — *P*.

The **FOURTH WAY** is that of violent opposition (ver. 6). **And the remnant:** the rest of the invited guests. **Took his servants and entreated** (treated) **them spitefully:** shamefully, injuriously. These are those in whom the Gospel of the grace of God rouses a fierce opposition, whose pride it wounds, whose self-righteousness it offends; who also, when they dare,

7. But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth ¹his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not ²worthy.

9. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10. So those servants went out into the highways, and ³gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11. And when the king came in to see the guests,

them. But the king was 7
wroth; and he sent his armies,
and destroyed those murder-
ers, and burned their city.
Then saith he to his servants, 8
The wedding is ready, but
they that were bidden were
not worthy. Go ye therefore 9
unto the partings of the high-
ways, and as many as ye
shall find, bid to the mar-
riage feast. And those ser- 10
vants went out into the high-
ways, and gathered together
all as many as they found,
both bad and good: and the
wedding was filled with guests.
But when the king came in 11
to behold the guests, he saw

¹ Dan. 9: 26. Luke 19: 27. ² Matt. 10: 11, 13. Acts 13: 46. ³ Matt. 13: 38, 47.

will visit on those that bring the message the hate which they bear to itself. — *Trench.* This was open rebellion. **And slew them.** The long list of prophets and apostles slain, the roll of martyrs in all ages, attest the truth of this picture. And still the Gospel arouses violent opposition in many hearts. Witness the early stages of every great reform which touches the worldly interests of men.

IV. **The Punishment.** — Ver. 7. But when the king heard thereof: when the time came for God to take notice of this rebellious spirit against himself and his Son. **He was wroth.** God is never angry, in the sense of unreasoning passion; but he has that deep, abiding indignation against wrong which must exist in all noble minds. The more one loves the good, the stronger must be the repulsion against sin, and the stronger the indignation against those who, in spite of every influence to make them better, yet persist not only in sinning, but in destroying others by sin. **He sent forth his armies:** those persons and those forces, whether consciously or unconsciously, whether animate or inanimate, which accomplish God's purposes of judgment. They may be angels, or earthquakes, or remorse of conscience, or the literal armies of the nations. Without doubt, here he refers to the Roman armies under Titus, which destroyed Jerusalem. **And destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.** This took place literally 40 years later, when Jerusalem was destroyed (A.D. 70), and the people were slain by millions, the ground around the city being scarcely able to contain the crosses on which the Jews were crucified. There has been no Jewish nation since.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED. (1) It is after every influence to make them better has been exhausted. (2) It is a just punishment. (3) It is necessary for the salvation of mankind. Without it evil would destroy the world. Therefore (4) even the judgments of God are the offspring of mercy and love.

V. **The Wedding furnished with Guests.** — Vers. 8-10. 8. Then saith he to his servants: the "invited" of ver. 3. **Were not worthy.** They proved themselves unworthy of the glorious blessings offered them, by refusing to accept the invitation.

9. Go ye therefore into the highways: or "the partings of the highways," public places, cross-roads, etc., in the king's city — the world. — *Riddle.*

10. Gathered together all . . . both bad and good. There is no condition of coming to Christ, but *just to come.* The bad are invited that *they may be made good* (1 Cor. 6: 9-11). Of the "good," Nathanael and Cornelius are illustrations; of the "bad," Matthew and Zacchæus, and Saul of Tarsus. — *Abbott.* The beautiful words of Augustine on Christ's love to his church may find here their application, "He loved her foul that he might make her fair." — *Trench.* Yet the *good* are not too good to need the Gospel, nor the *bad* so bad as to have no hope if they will accept it. — *Whedon.*

It is still the business of all Christians to go out into the highways and hedges and invite all, both good and bad, to come to the Gospel feast. The worse men are, the more degraded and sinful, the fewer their opportunities, the more they are opposed to good, so much the more do they need the invitations of the Gospel. — *P.* **The wedding was furnished with guests.** Christ's purposes and plans shall not fail. Here we have the assurance of the success of the Gospel.

VI. **The Guest without a Wedding Garment.** — Vers. 11-14. 11. And when the king came in to see the guests. According to the customs of society, both in

he saw there a man ¹ which had not on a wedding garment:

12. And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* ² into

there a man which had not on a wedding-garment: and he ¹² saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then ¹³ the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be the

¹ 2 Cor. 5: 3. Eph. 4: 24. Col. 3: 10, 12. Rev. 3: 4; 16: 15; 19: 8.

² Matt. 8: 12.

ancient and modern times, when a citizen entertains his equals he must himself be first in the festal hall to welcome his guests as they successively arrive; but when a sovereign invites subjects to his palace, he appears among them only when the company have all assembled. — *Arnot*. This represents the coming of God in the day of judgment. — *Binney*. It is the omniscient inspection of every disciple, from age to age. — *Brown*. He saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: either (1) a dress of his own suitable for the royal wedding occasion, just as now on dress occasions, and especially in royal receptions, a special dress is required; or (2) more probably a garment to be put over the usual dress, furnished by the king himself to all the guests on their arrival at the palace, before they entered the halls of the feast. — *P*. It is perfectly clear that for this sovereign's guests all that was needed for cleanliness of person and becomingness of attire was liberally provided for. In the royal lavers there was abundance of water, in which the guests might wash and be cleansed. In the inexhaustible royal wardrobes there was abundance of robes to furnish them all with appropriate raiment, "clean and white." — *Morison*.

INTERPRETATION. Those who repent, and propose to be subjects of the Messianic reign, must become righteous in character and life, or they cannot enjoy its benefits (Matt. 5: 20; Heb. 12: 14). — *Broadus*. Though all, both bad and good, are invited, no one will be allowed in the heavenly kingdom who is not prepared for the company and the occasion. In what that preparation consists, and how procured, he does not here teach. But other passages in Scripture answer these questions. Our own righteousness is as filthy rags (Isa. 64: 6); these God takes from us, that he may clothe us with garments of salvation (Luke 15: 22; Isa. 61: 10), which are washed white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7: 14). These we put on when we put on the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, in baptism (Rom. 13: 14; Gal. 3: 26, 27), which we do, not merely by a belief in Christ, but by such a personal reception of him, that we lay off the old man and put on a new man in Christ Jesus (Eph. 4: 24; Col. 3: 10-14). Without these garments of holiness, the free gift of God (Rev. 3: 18), none can enter heaven (Rev. 16: 15). The wedding garment, then, is neither charity nor faith, but the righteousness of the saints (Rev. 19: 8), *i.e.*, that radical change in character and life wrought by the Spirit of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, without which no man can see the Lord (Heb. 12: 14). To be without a wedding garment implied that the man thought his usual attire good enough for the king's wedding: he thus represents those who profess to follow Christ, but who think themselves good enough as they are, and do not seek from him that new birth without which no man can see the kingdom of heaven. — *Abbott*.

12. Friend: literally, *comrade, companion*. How camest thou, etc.: what excuse or reason have you for your conduct? — We may and ought, when God calls, to *come as we are*; but we may not, if we would see his face, and enjoy his last feast, *remain* as we are. — *Stier*. And he was speechless: because he had no good reason, he was self-convicted. — *P*. The judgment will be so conducted that the condemned will be compelled to own the justice of their sentence. — *Arnot*.

There is no good reason for refusing the conditions the Gospel imposes upon all who would be saved, for (1) they are necessary conditions; (2) they are simple and easy to understand; (3) abundant provision is made to enable all to fulfil them; (4) our own consciences approve.

13. Then said the king to the servants: or "attendants"; not the same word as in vers. 2-10. The "angels" are probably meant, as in the parable of the tares (Matt. 13: 41). — *Kiddle*. Bind him hand and foot. This points to the impossibility of escaping the purposed punishment. — *Kiddle*. Outer darkness: the darkness outside the royal banquetting house, which was brilliantly illuminated. His chagrin, shame, and anguish are expressed by the outward signs of weeping and gnashing of teeth. So sinners are outside of the glories of heaven, banished from the company of the saints and the presence of God, and are

outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, 14 but few are chosen.

14. ¹ For many are called, but few are chosen.

¹ Matt. 20: 16.

in the darkness of sin and pain and despair. "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie," — the entire moral refuse of society (Rev. 22: 15; compare Matt. 8: 11, 12).

14. For many are called, but few are chosen. The meaning of this statement is derived from the parable itself, which will keep us from hurtful error. We need to see the *divine side* which is implied in the very word "chosen," to assure us that God's plans and purposes will not fail, no matter what man may do. The *human side* is well expressed by Morison: "None can be wisely chosen to be everlasting partakers of the divine hospitality and bliss, but such as choose to accept the gracious invitation. *They who choose the divine choice are divinely chosen. They who refuse or reject the divine choice are divinely refused and rejected.* The chosen are 'chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,' according to something real that is the object of foreknowledge, and 'through sanctification of the Spirit' (1 Pet. 1: 2). They are 'chosen unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit,' on the divine and higher side of things. 'and through belief of the truth,' on the human and lower side. While it is far from being the case that everything is left to human choice, it is the case that *there is something which men must either choose or refuse*; and as they choose or refuse, their doom is fixed."

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

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PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Ver. 2. The Gospel is like a feast, delightful, joyous, satisfying, varied, abundant, social, with "a feast of reason and a flow of soul."

2. Vers. 3, 4. Christ desires all to come: he sends his invitations again and again. His purpose is one of love and blessing.

3. Everything is prepared for the redemption of man, — heaven, love, the atonement, the strongest motives, the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. Vers. 5, 6. One of the strangest things in the universe is that so many reject the invitations of God to his highest blessings.

5. Some violently oppose the Gospel, and some merely neglect; but both alike fail of heaven.

6. Man has no *right* to be lost. "He is under the most solemn obligations to be saved." — Barnes.

7. Vers. 7, 13. The destruction of the finally impenitent is certain, eternal, terrible.

8. It is love that reveals this, in order that men may escape it.

9. Ver. 9. Christians should carry the invitation of Christ to all, even those who seem least likely to come.

10. Ver. 10. All are invited to come "just as they are," but not to *remain* as they are.

11. Ver. 11. We may enter the church, but we cannot dwell in the kingdom of heaven unless we have that "holiness without which no man can see the Lord."

12. The conditions which God requires are such that all can possess them who will.

13. All who refuse to love and obey Christ will at length acknowledge themselves to be without excuse.

14. Ver. 14. Those who are chosen will give proof of it by acting accordingly.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

As Review Sunday has intervened between our last regular lesson and this, it will be needful to recall the time and circumstances.

SUBJECT, — GOD'S WELCOMES AND MAN'S REFUSALS.

I. THE GOSPEL FEAST (vers. 1, 2). Set forth the attractions and blessings of the Gospel, especially from your own experience.

II. THE INVITATION AND WELCOME (vers. 3, 4). All things are prepared for the salvation of men, and all men are invited to come. In what ways and by whom God is now sending his invitations.

III. THE INVITATION REFUSED (vers. 5, 7). The two classes, neglecters and opposers. The power of worldliness.

Illustration.

"A finger's breadth at hand may mar
A world of light in heaven afar;
A mote eclipse a glorious star."

Illustrations. *The Danger of Simple Neglect.* (1) The story of a man asleep in a boat in the rapids of Niagara, when the boat became loose, and floated toward the falls. (2) The two boys in a boat on the edge of the Maelstrom, unconsciously circling nearer and nearer to the central whirlpool. They need not row toward destruction. Simple neglect will soon bring them there.

NOTE the *just destruction* of those who refused to accept. God does all that wisdom and love can do to save men, and when all fails, he must destroy them.

Illustrations can be found in the necessary treatment of criminals, of those engaged in the liquor traffic, especially those tempting the young. The destruction of the world by the flood. The destruction of Sodom. The destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70.

IV. THE INVITATION ACCEPTED (vers. 8-10). Even if we refuse, some will accept. Let us repeat the invitation. The worse men are, the more they need the Gospel, and the more we should press them to come, and be changed into good men.

V. THE MAN WITHOUT A WEDDING GARMENT (vers. 11-14). Men want the blessings of the Gospel without fulfilling the necessary conditions. Press the absolute necessity of a change of heart, and the holiness Jesus has come to bring.

Illustration. *The Wedding Garment.* An Oriental king sent to a vizier, who was approaching the capital, a royal robe. But the officer who was to present it, out of spite sent in its stead a plain habit. The vizier would not appear in the city arrayed in this, lest it should be taken as an evidence that he was in disgrace at court; and put on, in its stead, a royal habit, the gift of the late king, and in that made his public entry into the city. When this was known at court, they declared the vizier a dog, that he had disdainfully thrown away the royal apparel, saying, "I have no need of Shah Sefi's habits!" Their account incensed the king, who severely felt the affront, and it cost the vizier his life. Olearius (*Travels*) gives an account of himself, with the ambassadors whom he accompanied, being invited to the table of the Persian king. He goes on to say, "It was told us by the ambassadors that we, according to their usage, must hang the splendid vests that were sent us from the king over our dresses, and so appear in his presence. There was, strictly speaking, no changing of apparel, for the garment of honor was either a vest drawn over the other garments, or a mantle hung on the shoulders. Schulz, in his *Travels*, describes that given to him, as "a long robe, with loose sleeves which hang down (for the arm is not put into them), the white ground of which is goat's hair, mixed with some silver; but the flowers woven in are of gold-colored silk." — *Rosenmuller*.

Illustration. Many are called; few are chosen. Of what avail, asks a Puritan writer, that you call your ship Invincible, if the tiniest gun that ever was levelled against it smote its sides and crumbled it into small dust? . . . Of what account is it to call a base metal silver? Many are called, but few are real. — *Joseph Parker*.

LESSON II.—APRIL 8.

CHRIST'S LAST WARNING.—MATT. 23: 27-39.

GOLDEN TEXT. — Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. — Ps. 51: 10.

TIME. — Tuesday, April 4, A.D. 30. The same day as the last lesson.

PLACE. — The temple at Jerusalem.

INTERVENING HISTORY. — Matt. 22: 15-46; 23: 1-26; Mark 12: 13-40; Luke 20: 20-47.

INTRODUCTION.

Jesus continues his discourses in the temple on this last day of his public ministry. After the parable in our last lesson, the Jewish leaders seek to entrap Jesus by questions concerning the payment of taxes to the Romans, concerning the practical difficulties about the resurrection of the dead, and concerning the law. Jesus answers them all, and then asks in return a question about David's prophecy of the Messiah, a sincere answer to which would have helped them to see the truth about Jesus the Messiah. Then follow most earnest warnings to the Jewish leaders, of which discourse our lesson for to-day is a part. — *P.*

27. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ¹ for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness.

Woe unto you, scribes and 27
Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye
are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones,

¹ Luke 11: 44. Acts 23: 3.

EXPLANATORY.

There is nothing, by common consent of all men who are entitled to judge upon the matter, in all eloquence, ancient or modern, to compare, for grandeur of malediction, for moral nobleness, for intellectual insight, with the eloquence of this denunciation of Christ's. How it rolls and scorches like floods of lava! — *Joseph Parker.*

I. **Whited Sepulchres.** — Vers. 27, 28. 27. **Woe unto you.** Not the utterance of a wish, but a statement of a fact that woe must follow such conduct and crown such characters. It was God's brand upon hypocrisy that they might see how vile and dangerous a thing it was. — *P.* **Scribes and Pharisees.** In the scribes and Pharisees we see ignorance, hypocrisy, pride, insolence, selfishness, rapacity, a restless desire for the applause of men, and an overbearing contempt for all but themselves. In Christ we see knowledge, wisdom, meekness, gentleness, generosity, sincerity, perfect disinterestedness, elevated piety, and unbounded benevolence toward all, however humble or poor. Gentle and peaceful as our Saviour was, he could not, without being false to himself and his mission, have refrained from affixing the brand of his indignant reprobation on characters and conduct such as theirs. His whole character constrains us to regard them as the well-weighed "words of truth and soberness," wrung from him by the sight of the widespread and enduring mischief which these self-constituted leaders of the people were entailing upon their unhappy followers. — *W. L. Alexander, D.D.* **Hypocrites!** *Hypocrite* is derived from a Greek word meaning "to play a part on a stage." The player appears in one character while he is really another; the beggar may be dressed like a king, and a fool act the part of a wise man. Hence the word came to mean "the assuming of a false appearance of virtue and religion." **For ye are like unto whited sepulchres.** Around Jerusalem are many sepulchres of various kinds. Some are chambers hewn out of solid rock, some are graves without mark or monument, and many consist of a "grave with a slab over it, or some erection of mason work, plastered over, such as is common among the Mohammedans at the present day. This superimposed mason-work seems to have been periodically or occasionally whitewashed with a solution of chalk or lime. It is doubtless to this third class of sepulchres that our Saviour makes reference in the passage before us." Early in spring, on the 15th day of the month Adar (February to March), just one month before the Passover, and in view of the multitudes soon to assemble, it was the custom of the Jews to put to rights the roads in and around the cities, and to re-whitewash the sepulchres with a preparation of chalk and water. The object of this was principally to render them conspicuous, and thus to give notice to the traveller that graves were there, so that ceremonial defilement might be avoided; for by the law, any one who touched a grave was unclean for seven days (Num. 19: 16). "The Jerusalem Gemarists give the reason thus: *It is that they may be like the leper. The leper cries out, UNCLEAN! UNCLEAN! and here, in like manner, uncleanness cries out to you, and says, COME NOT NEAR!* When newly "whited," as they had just been at the period of the year when our Saviour was speaking, they looked clean, and gleamed beautifully, as we have often seen them, in the sunshine." — *Alorison.* **But are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.** The ceremonial law prohibiting contact with dead bodies was based on natural law. The decaying body is not only repulsive to the sense of smell, and defiling to the touch, but at certain stages the impurity is deadly. The smallest particle

28. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

29. ¹Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

and of all uncleanness. Even 28 so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Woe unto you, scribes and 29 Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the

¹ Luke 11: 47.

introduced into the blood through a wound may bring early death. Many a doctor has fallen a victim to this contact in the dissecting-room. So spiritual death is not only defiling, but deadly (1 John 3: 14, 15). The heart of the hypocrite is not only repulsive, but destructive; not only evil to himself, but contaminating to others; not only contaminating, but a leaven of death. — *P.*

28. **Even so ye also.** NOTE that Jesus spoke this to the faces of the guilty ones, not behind their backs. He was no backbiter. The hard truths he was compelled to utter were spoken to the guilty ones themselves, and at the cost of the speaker's life. NOTE, too, that Jesus could speak such words as follow, *because he knew what was in the hearts of men.* It is seldom that *we* do know, and therefore we must be careful lest we bear false witness about our brethren. — *P.* **Ye outwardly appear righteous unto men:** not unto God. They made long prayers, they gave good advice to others, and bound heavy burdens upon them; they were scrupulously careful about the outward observances of the law; they paid tithes even to mint, anise, and cummin, the herbs and weeds of their gardens (see Matt. 23: 13-26). **But within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.** Better, *lawlessness* — a reckless disregard of the very law of which they professed to be the interpreters. — *Ellicott.* "Your heart is not a temple of the living God, but a grave of pestilent corruption; not a heaven, but a hell. And your religion is but the whitewash — hardly skin-deep." — *Alford.* "Hypocrisy" is the whitewash. They devoured widows' houses, they were full of extortion and excess, they broke the spirit of the laws they pretended to keep. Their motives were selfish, their hearts were rotten (see vers. 13-26, and Luke 11: 39-48).

MODERN APPLICATIONS. Perhaps there are very few deliberate hypocrites, but there are many dangers in the direction of hypocrisy, against which we must guard; as saying our prayers, but not really praying; making a profession of religion when we have none in our hearts; going through the forms of religion, without its spirit; doing good, giving to the poor, with selfish motives; saying hard things against the church to appease our own consciences for not becoming Christians.

NOTE. The cure of hypocrisy is not the giving up the outward forms and professions, but in having a right heart and pure motive within. — *P.*

BRIGHT SAYINGS. 1. Some hypocrites and mortified men that held down their heads like bulrushes, were like the little images that they place in the very *bowing* of the vaults of churches, that look as if they held up the church, but are but puppets. — *Bacon.* 2. When a man puts on a character he is stranger to, there's as much difference between what he appears, and what he is really in himself, as there is between a vizard and a face. — *La Bruyere.* 3. Saint abroad and devil at home. — *Bunyan.* 4. He stole the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in. — *Pollock.* 5. He was all false and hollow though his tongue dropped manna. — *Milton.* 6. One may smile and smile and be a villain. — *Shakespeare.*

7. Oh serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face!
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave? — *Shakespeare.*

II. **Building the Tombs of the Prophets.** — Vers. 29-31. 29. Woe unto you, . . . because ye build the tombs of the prophets. Among the Mohammedans it is a common way of showing respect for any distinguished man to build a tomb for him. By doing this, they profess respect for his character and veneration for his memory. So the Pharisees, by building tombs in this manner, professedly approved of the character and conduct of the prophets, and disapproved of the conduct of their fathers in killing them. — *Barnes.* Our Lord seems to be referring to those four remarkable monuments which stand even now at the base of the Mount of Olives, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, just below the southeast angle of the temple mount. They would be conspicuous objects to one standing on the platform of the temple. They are miscalled, at present, the tombs of Zechariah, Absalom, Jehoshaphat, and St. James. Not unlikely, the first two were the tombs which

30. And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

31. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

32. ² Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

33. Ye serpents, ye ³ generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

34. ⁴ Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and ⁵ some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and ⁶ some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

tombs of the righteous, and ³⁰ say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye witness ³¹ to yourselves, that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure ³² of your fathers. Ye serpents, ³³ ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell? Therefore, behold, ³⁴ I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: some of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from

¹ Acts 7: 51, 52. ¹ Thess. 2: 15. ² Gen. 15: 16. ¹ Thess. 2: 16. ³ Matt. 3: 7; 12: 34. ⁴ Matt. 21: 34, 35. Luke 11: 49. ⁵ Acts 5: 40; 7: 58, 59. ⁶ Matt. 10: 17. ² Cor. 11: 24, 25.

the scribes and Pharisees were engaged in constructing at the time that our Saviour addressed them, and that the other two were the sepulchres which they were "garnishing" or beautifying, viz., in their entrances. "Nothing can seem more natural than that our Lord should have pointed to them, and thus have increased the force of his words by adducing the very monuments on which his hearers were gazing, as proofs of the hypocrisy he was upbraiding." — *Morison*. **Garnish:** adorn. **Sepulchres of the righteous:** those considered especially saintly, implying that they admired and approved of their characters. But they did it "in lieu of observing their words, imbibing their spirit, or imitating their lives. Thus Herod the Great, a monster of cruelty, rebuilt the sepulchre of David." — *Abbott*.

30. And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, etc. Our fathers, worthy men! were quite wrong in shedding the blood of the prophets. Had we been they, we should have acted quite differently! Was there anything wrong in saying this? Not in the least, *if what they said was true*. — *Morison*. This was their *profession*; the next verse shows their practice.

31. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, etc.: by your plotting to kill me, a prophet, you show that while you profess to differ from your fathers, by building their tombs, in reality you are doing just what they did. For that very afternoon they had been plotting against Jesus (Matt. 21: 45, 46; 23: 15). — *P*. So Calvin says of the corrupt church in his day: "Let them, then, adorn the images of the saints as they please, with incense, candles, flowers, and every kind of pomp. If Peter were now alive, they would tear him in pieces; Paul they would bury with stones; and if Christ himself were yet in the world, they would burn him with a slow fire."

III. **Warnings.** — Vers. 32-36. 32. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. The language both of prophecy and of terrible irony and invective. Fill up the measure of guilt. The past generations had been adding iniquity to iniquity, till they had almost come to that state when there was no hope of their being better, and nothing was left but to destroy them. The present generation were filling up the measure; and with the killing of Jesus the measure became full, and the end of their nation was at hand. — *P*.

33. Ye serpents. "Representing their cunning, insidious, deceitful, and depraved character, their hurtful and poisonous influence." "Forever hissing at the heels of the holy." **Generation of vipers:** offspring, brood of vipers. They were the brood of viperous parentage, and all of the old serpent, the devil (Gen. 3: 1; John 8: 44; Rev. 12: 9). — *G. W. Clark*. How can ye escape the damnation (condemnation) of hell? *i. e.*, the judgment which condemns to punishment in hell. — *Broadus*.

34. Wherefore: because of your character, when I send prophets to you, you will slay them. **Prophets . . . wise men.** Referring to John the Baptist, and the apostles and preachers of the New Kingdom. They were sent, as the Bible everywhere represents, to warn and save the nation. God would do everything possible for their salvation. **And some . . . ye shall kill and crucify.** Kill directly, as Stephen (Acts 7: 59); indirectly, as James (Acts 12: 2); and crucify by means of the Roman power, as Symeon, second Bishop of Jerusalem (Eus. *H. E.* iii. 32). — *Carr*. **Persecute them from city to city:** as Paul pursued Christians to Damascus; as he was himself driven from Antioch in Pisidia, from Iconium, from Philippi, and from Thessalonica. — *Carr*.

35. ¹That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, ²from the blood of righteous Abel unto the ³blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

36. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

37. ⁴O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and ⁵stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

city to city: that upon you ³⁵ may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily I say ³⁶ unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, ³⁷ which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens

¹ Rev. 18: 24. ² Gen. 4: 8. ³ 1 John 3: 12. ⁴ 2 Chron. 24: 20, 21. ⁵ Luke 13: 34. ⁶ 2 Chron. 24: 21. Ps. 17: 8; 91: 4.

35. **That upon you may come.** Denoting the intent of God, not merely the result. It was in God's plans to bring the final punishment upon this generation. **All the righteous blood:** the blood of holy men who had been martyred for righteousness' sake, *i.e.*, the punishment for shedding it. **From the blood of righteous Abel** (Gen. 4: 8-12; Heb. 12: 24) **unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias.** (1) A very memorable martyrdom is recorded in 2 Chron. 24: 20-22, in which a prophet, named Zachariah, was stoned "in the court of the house of the Lord, at the commandment of the king." That Zachariah was, however, the son of Jehoiada. Still, Jehoiada may have had two names, or he may have been the grandfather of Zacharias, and Barachias have been his father; or, as many think, "the son of Barachias" is a copyist's error, for it is not given in Luke's account. The Books of Chronicles, in which this murder is recorded, are the last in order in the Hebrew Canon; and the expression "from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias," may naturally be understood as meaning from the first murder recorded in Scripture to the last. — *Cook*. (2) The only "Zechariah the son of Barachias," in the Old Testament, is the minor prophet whose writings occupy the last place but one among the prophetic books of the Old Testament (Zech. 1: 1). Of his death we know nothing. — *Ellicott*. **Whom ye slew:** you, the Jewish nation. **Between the temple:** the sanctuary, the temple proper. **And the altar:** the altar of burnt offerings in the court of the priests.

36. **All these things shall come upon this generation.** Referring to the fearful calamities to come upon the Jewish people, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem, about forty years afterwards. The punishment was a national one. But the individuals of the last generation received no more than their just due, nor of the former less, since another world completes the individual punishment. — *Rev. Com.*

CUMULATIVE POWER OF SIN. When we sin against the laws of nature in our bodies, there seems to be no immediate evil result; but the evil accumulates by repeated acts, till at last, by one act, the cup of iniquity is full, and the body succumbs to disease, and perhaps death. The same process goes on in the individual soul, and also in the life of a nation. — *P.*

IV. A Lamentation over Jerusalem. — Vers. 37-39. 37. **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem.** A mighty emotion of compassion follows the stern language of denunciation. — *Rev. Com.* How ineffably grand and melting is this apostrophe! It is the very heart of God pouring itself forth through human flesh and speech. It is the incarnation of the innermost life and love of Deity, pleading with men, bleeding for them, and ascending, only to open his arms to them, and win them back by the power of this story of matchless love, that has conquered the world, that will yet "draw all men unto him," and beautify and ennoble humanity itself. — *J., F. and B.* **How often would I have gathered thy children together:** all through their history; but especially now, when by receiving their Messiah they might have been under the protection and care of the Almighty and reigned as Queen, dispensing blessings to all the world. **As a hen.** The Greek is generic, *as a bird*. **Gathereth her chickens under her wings:** for rest, warmth, affection, defence against all enemies, shelter from all storms.

BIBLE WORDS, expressing God's desire that men be saved. The whole scheme of salvation, the very existence of the Bible itself, the coming of Jesus Christ, are positive proofs that God wants men to be saved, by repenting and believing (see John 3: 14-17; Isa. 55: 1, 7; Ezek. 18: 32; Mark 16: 15; Luke 19: 10; John 1: 7). **And ye would not.** The only

38. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, ¹Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is ³⁸ left unto you desolate. For I ³⁹ say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

¹ Ps. 118: 26. Matt. 21: 9.

reason they were not saved was their own choice of evil. This is the bitterest ingredient in the cup of the lost, that they have no one to blame but themselves.

38. Behold, your house: the temple; the home of their religion, of their hopes, of their existence as a people of God. Is left unto you desolate. *Your house is left to you: I leave it; and therefore it is desolate.* The Saviour's reference is to his own leaving or departure, — a leaving that involved the penal departure of his Father as the Head of the theocracy. The Jewish theocracy was to be a theocracy no longer. "Ichabod" was to be its name. The Jews henceforth, instead of being the people and kingdom of God, would be a mere Semitic nationality, under the dynasty of the Herods, or under no dynasty at all. Their temple would be an empty edifice, dedicated to the empty celebration of an empty ritual. — *Morison.*

39. Ye shall not see me henceforth. He now closed his public ministry among them. They saw him no more in his Messianic ministration and work. After his resurrection he appeared, not to all the people, but to chosen witnesses (Acts 10: 41). — *G. W. Clark.* Till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: that is, till you shall recognize me as your Messiah, as the multitudes did on his triumphal entry, quoting from Ps. 118: 26 (see Matt. 21: 9). Sometime the Jews will be converted, and hail Jesus as their King, and will be restored in some way to be a people of the living God. They were not left without a star of hope, even in the dense darkness of this hour.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Thomson's *Land and Book*, new ed., 1: 443-445; Robinson's *Researches*, 1: 521; Porter's *Handbook of Syria*, 148; Thrupp's *Ancient Jerusalem*, 227-231; Bush's *Illustrations of Scripture*, 590; Little's *Historical Lights*, 320; Foster's *Cyclopaedia of Illustrations*, 1: 3112-3120, 2: 9692-9709. *Sermons*, by Payson, Melvill, Emmons, Davies, Frelinghuysen.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Vers. 27, 28. We here see what the things are that arouse the indignation of Jesus Christ.

2. We see in Christ "a devotion to truth which clothed him with sublimest fearlessness." He spoke these words to those who could and did kill him.

3. Christ's "woe unto you" is not an utterance of passion, but of loving indignation, that would rescue men from their sins by violent means when gentler ones are of no avail.

4. The woe which is enfolded in every sin as fruits and flowers in a seed, is made known to men that they may thus realize what a dreadful thing sin is, and hasten to put it away.

5. Hypocrites are the most hardened of sinners; they are not only wicked, but they see clearly what they ought to be, and are wicked in spite of it.

6. Hypocrisy is a sort of homage that vice pays to virtue. — *Rochefoucauld.*

7. The fact that there are hypocrites is no proof that there are no sincere Christians.

8. Vers. 29-31. Honoring the great and good men of the past who cannot reprove us, is an easy and common way of seeming virtuous.

9. The true honoring of the good is to imitate their example.

10. The deceitfulness of sinners' hearts appears very much in this, that they fancy that if they had other people's opportunities, they would have improved them more faithfully; if they had been in other people's temptations, they would have resisted them more vigorously; when yet they improve not the opportunities they have, nor resist the temptations they are in. — *Henry.*

11. Vers. 34-37. God makes every effort to save men from their sins; his heart longs to receive them as his children, and protect them from every evil.

12. But (vers. 33-38) if men refuse, if they determine to remain serpents when God would have them to become angels, there is nothing left but to destroy them.

13. Men reject God's efforts to save. They stumble into destruction over the very stairway to heaven.

14. Vers. 32, 35, 36. There is a cumulative force in sin. At the last of a long series of sins the final punishment comes, both in the individual body and soul and in the nation.

15. Ver. 38. The saddest condition of a nation or an individual is when God has forsaken them after they have forsaken God.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

It may assist the imagination and bring the whole scene with its moral suggestions more vividly around us, if we think of Christ standing *to-day* in any Christian community, surrounded by men who have been playing falsely with his name. The scribes and Pharisees were *present*: he was not hurling maledictions upon the *absent*. The men were fascinated, spell-bound. — *Joseph Parker*. Remember, too, that these men had the power and the will to kill him. Hence the marvellous courage of the words spoken.

SUBJECT, — WARNINGS AND LAMENTATIONS.

I. WARNINGS AGAINST HYPOCRISY OF HEART (vers. 27, 28).

Illustration. Woe is as really the natural outgrowth of sin, and especially of hypocrisy, as an oak is the outgrowth of an acorn.

Illustration. Jesus put this sign upon hypocrisy, *Woe unto you*, as Christian and Hopeful, in Pilgrim's Progress, put up a signboard over the way that led to Giant Despair's Castle, from which they had just escaped, warning men not to go that way.

Illustration. An infidel came to Dr. Chalmers, and said that Christ could not be as good as was claimed, or he would never have spoken such harsh words as he did to the scribes and Pharisees. Dr. Chalmers asked him to point out the words. He did so, pointing to this chapter from which our lesson is taken. Then the doctor read them so tenderly, with such infinite pathos and love, that the unbeliever acknowledged that Christ might *so* have uttered them. — *P.*

BIBLICAL EMBLEMS OF HYPOCRISY. Graves overgrown with grass (Luke 11: 44). Potsherds covered with silver dross (Prov. 26: 23). Tares, that look like wheat (Matt. 13: 38). Wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7: 15). Wells without water (2 Pet. 2: 17). Clouds without rain (Jude 12). A cloak to cover sin (1 Thes. 2: 5).

Illustration. Ottocar, king of Bohemia, refused to do homage to Rodolphus I., till, being conquered in war, he agreed to do homage to him if he could do it privately in a tent. But the tent was so contrived that by drawing a cord all was taken away, and so Ottocar was presented on his knees, doing his homage, in full view of three armies then on the field. Thus God at last will uncase the closest dissembler to the sight of men, angels, and devils. — *Spencer*, "Things New and Old."

II. WARNINGS AGAINST HYPOCRISY OF LIFE (vers. 29-33).

III. GOD'S DESIRE TO SAVE MEN FROM SIN (vers. 34, 37).

IV. THE DESTRUCTION OF THOSE WHO REJECT CHRIST.

Illustrations.

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these, 'It might have been.'" — *Whittier*.

What can be sadder than to have ever before one two pictures: one of what God meant us to be, all the blessedness, usefulness, glory, that we were created for. The other, a picture of our sins and failures, our evil lives, our selfish hearts, and the flames which sin kindles in the soul; and to know that *we* have destroyed the first and created the other. It is all our own doings. Every lost sinner is a moral suicide.

LESSON III. — APRIL 15.

CHRISTIAN WATCHFULNESS — MATT. 24: 42-51.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.* — MARK 13: 37.

TIME. — Tuesday afternoon, April 4, A.D. 30. The same day, and soon after the last lesson.

PLACE. — The Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem, on the way to Bethany.

INTERVENING HISTORY. — After the discourse in our last lesson, Jesus gave instruction from the widow's two mites (Mark 12: 41-44); then the words of Isaiah about unbelief are applied to the Jews (John 12: 37-50); after which Jesus, with his disciples,

leaves the temple, never to enter it again. As they look at the buildings they have just left, Jesus predicts their complete destruction (Matt. 24: 1, 2). They journey on together toward Bethany over the Mount of Olives, and when upon the hill overlooking the temple, Jesus, in answer to questions from his disciples, gives them many counsels in view of the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the age, and the coming of the Son of man (Matt. 24: 3-41). Our lesson to-day is a part of this conversation.

CO-ORDINATE SCRIPTURES. — Mark 13: 33-37; Luke 12: 35-48; 21: 24-36.

42. ¹ Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.	Watch therefore: for ye know ⁴² not on what day your Lord
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¹ Matt. 25: 13. Mark 13: 33. Luke 21: 36.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Duty of Watching. — Ver. 42. A. **WHAT IT IS TO WATCH.** **Watch therefore.** *Watch*, both in the Greek and in the English, is closely allied to *wake*. In the Greek, according to Thayer, it is derived from the perfect tense, "to have been aroused from sleep, to be awake." It expresses not a mere act, but a state of wakefulness and watching. — *P.* What the Saviour enjoins is not curiosity straining to be the first to see the returning Master, but the wakefulness and diligence that overlooks no duty, indulges no indolence. *Work and watch.* Unless we work we shall not keep spiritually awake and lively; unless we are awake we shall not work. The last thing that would please a master would be the idle curiosity which would make the servants neglect their work to stand outside the door gazing to catch a glimpse of his return. What the Master desires is wakeful work. — *R. Glover.* We see this truth expressed in ver. 36. We watch by serving the Lord as faithfully as if he were ever looking upon us. We watch by being on our guard against every temptation and danger. Watchfulness is the opposite of careless security; it is a state of readiness.

B. **AGAINST WHAT TO WATCH.** **Therefore:** on account of the state of things Jesus had just been describing. Read over the preceding verses of this chapter. There were to be wars, persecutions, great iniquities, false prophets, the love of saints even growing cold, fearful tribulations which could be typified only by the sun and moon darkened and the stars falling from heaven; great changes and overturnings which seemed like the end of all things, but was in reality the spring-time of the new kingdom, the birth of the new heavens and the new earth.

So we are to watch against temptations from within and without; against pervading iniquities which fill the air with moral malaria, or chill the piety of even the church; against failure in duty; against the loss of the warmth of first love; against the day of death and of judgment, so as to be prepared for them when they come.

C. **FOR WHAT TO WATCH.** For the coming of the Lord: watch for it with hope and joy, watch for the signs of his special presence and power, watch for openings to serve him by helping his poor children, watch for opportunities of comforting the sad, upholding the weak, reclaiming the erring, teaching the ignorant, leading men to Jesus, aiding his cause.

D. **WHY TO WATCH.** **For ye know not what hour (or day, as in Rev. Ver.) your Lord doth come.** Ignorance of the time of his coming is the reason given for watchfulness. The same reason will apply to death and the judgments which are coming on the earth. We should watch, since we know not their time. — *G. W. Clark.* But with all the obscurity thus intentionally thrown around the day and the hour of Christ's coming, let us not forget that no obscurity, no uncertainty, hangs around the great event itself. In all that future which lies before us, these are the only two events of which we are absolutely certain: our own approaching death, our Lord's approaching advent. — *Hanna.*

THE COMING OF THE LORD. Let us not, because there have been misinterpretations and false views about the coming of the Lord, on that account cloud to our eyes and hearts the glorious blessedness of this truth. The second advent described in this chapter is a threefold unity, like a great mountain range, which is really but one mountain system, and, when described as seen from a distant point, may be described as one mountain; and yet, on a nearer view, is seen to consist of three ranges, rising one above the other, with long spaces between.

I. There was a *second advent which culminated at the destruction of Jerusalem*, when Christ's kingdom had really been established on the earth in the place of the old dispensa-

43. ¹But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

44. ²Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

cometh. But know this, that 43 if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore be ye 44 also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of

¹ Luke 12: 39. 1 Thess. 5: 2. 2 Pet. 3: 10. Rev. 3: 3; 16: 15. ² Matt. 25: 13. 1 Thess. 5: 6.

tion; the removal of the holy city and the temple and its sacrifices made for the acceptance of the true kingdom and sacrifice of Christ: the accuracy of the prophecy recorded in this chapter in its application to this event, the repeated declaration that this coming should take place in *this generation* (ver. 30), and while some of the disciples who heard Christ should be still living (vers. 34; Mark 9: 1), proves that this must be what is referred to. (1) It was a *second coming*, a return after his departure. (2) It was *personal*: he promised to abide with the church. (3) It was preceded by great judgments. (4) The Gospel was first preached to all nations.

II. *There will be a second advent when the Gospel has triumphed over all the earth, and the millennium is ushered in, and the believers scattered through many nations, and organizations shall become one visible kingdom.* This is the full coming of the kingdom prophesied in Daniel and the Old Testament; this is the coming the later apostles were expecting; this is what John means when he prayed, "Lord Jesus, come quickly." It was not the judgment and the destruction of the world, but the *conversion of the world*, they longed for, and for which we long and pray. (1) This is *personal*, for Christ will reign in every heart. (2) It will be preceded by the fall of all the powers of evil, "tyrannies, and hierarchies, and slaveries, and idolatries, and systems of false religion. The governments of the earth, as now founded, must perish, and be changed into governments for the good of the people. These stars shall fall, and powers be shaken. (3) It will be a coming in the clouds with power and glory; for the source of all these triumphs of Christ is from heaven, and no kingdom is so glorious or so powerful as this.

III. *There will be a coming of Christ, in visible presence, at the time of the judgment and resurrection*, as in 1 Thess. 4: 13-18; Rev. 20: 7 to 22: 5; and Matt. 25. These comings were not always clearly distinguished, because they are really one great whole. — P.

IV. Practically the Lord cometh to each of us in every great crisis of our lives, but especially in the hour of death, "after which is the judgment." — P.

II. *The Duty illustrated by One watching against Robbers.* — Vers. 43, 44.
43. **But know this.** "The verb may be rendered either in the imperative or the indicative mood. The idea is the same in either case: Ye do not know the day of Christ's coming; but ye know the duty and the necessity of constant watchfulness" in worldly affairs. **If the goodman of the house: the master or owner of the house. Had known in what watch the thief would come: or was coming.** In earlier times the Jewish night, from sunset to sunrise, was divided into three watches, but under the Romans into four. **He would not have suffered his house to be broken up:** broken through, or into. Literally it is *to-be-dug-through*, a graphic word, appropriate to describe the action that would be required to get into a house whose walls consisted in a great measure of mud. Such was the kind of houses inhabited by the mass of the people in primitive times. There are still myriads of them in the East. "In Egypt," says Horatio B. Hackett, "and most of the towns of Palestine, at the present time, the houses are built, not of wood or stone as we build them, but of mud more or less hardened by exposure to the sun, or of mud and pebbles mixed together." — *Illustrations of Scripture*, p. 59. The easiest way, therefore, and the most noiseless, for burglars to operate, was not to force the door, but, as it were, to delve or dig the walls. — *Morison*.

44. **Therefore be ye also ready:** be always prepared, never be spiritually asleep, never be away from your place and duty. One cannot always watch his house; he must have times of sleep; but in spiritual things he can always be ready for the coming of his Lord. **For in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.** "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5: 2; see also 2 Pet. 3: 10). The comings of the Lord are ever unexpected to us, — his coming at death, his coming to judge the world, his coming in the crises of our lives, his coming with opportunities and open doors, his coming with the power of the Holy Spirit. The only way

45. ¹Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

46. ²Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

47. Verily I say unto you, ³That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

man cometh. Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath set over his household, to give them their food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say 47 unto you, that he will set him

¹ Luke 12: 42. Acts 20: 28. 1 Cor. 4: 2. Heb. 3: 5. ² Rev. 16: 15. ³ Matt. 25: 21, 23. Luke 22: 29.

is for us to be ever about our Master's business, ever doing his will, ever loving his presence, ever walking with God, and we shall be ready and glad when he comes. — *P.*

THE THINGS WHICH TEND TO PUT US TO SLEEP: the delay of the coming; coldness and worldliness in the community; our sinful hearts and desires; unbelief, insidious temptations which gradually lead astray before we are aware.

III. **Illustrated by a Faithful Servant.** — Vers. 45-47. A similar parable is given in Luke 12: 42-46. 45. Who then is a faithful and wise servant? or steward, who was generally a slave whom his master had chosen on account of his trustworthiness and intelligence to be the steward of his estate. — *Prof. Carr.* Mark's account (13: 34) represents a number of servants left by the master, each with his appointed work. Here one servant is placed over the whole as a steward. — *Rev. Com.* **Whom his lord hath made ruler over his household:** while he himself went abroad. This power was conferred on account of previous faithfulness and ability, — referring to the apostles, to ministers, who are over the household of God, and in their sphere to all Christians. — *P.* Whoever, by reason of genius, position, or wealth, has influence or control over others is in so far placed over them, and is accountable to his Lord for the administration of his trust. — *Abbott.* **To give them meat (food) in due season:** according to the duty of stewards of a large estate. So ministers are to break the bread of life to those under their charge, giving to each one his portion. The object of God in giving men talent or power is that they may minister to others. — *P.* *Who?* it is the servant who attends to his duties, every day and every hour, just as he would do if he knew that his lord would return that very day, or in that very hour. He only is *faithful* to his lord. He only is *prudent* and *wise* for himself. — *Morison.*

46. **Blessed is that servant.** When our Lord uses this epithet, "blessed," he always means to represent the thing spoken of as high and rare, — a rare man, a hero, one of a thousand. It means further that great shall be his reward. — *A. B. Bruce.* **Whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing:** performing his duty honestly and carefully as if in his master's presence.

47. **He shall make him ruler over all his goods:** he will promote him to the highest position in his establishment, thus conferring upon him the highest honor and reward of which he is susceptible. — *Morison.* The position he had for a time on trial while his master was away, will be made permanent, and the sphere enlarged from steward of his household, to manager of his whole estate.

THE GOOD SERVANT. The good servant is *faithful*, to his lord and in his trust; *prudent*, in watching for his lord's coming; *beneficent*, using his power as a trust, for others; *patient*, in continuing his well-doing till the coming of his Lord. — *Abbott.*

THE REWARD. "That promotion shall not be like earthly promotion, wherein the eminence of one excludes that of another, — but rather like the diffusion of love, in which, the more each has, the more there is for all." — *Alford.* So each saint owns all God's possessions, even now (1 Cor. 3: 21, 22). — *Abbott.* The reward is both outward and inward, more glories and blessings and joys, and larger capacities for usefulness and enjoyment. Larger fields and wider spheres are given, greater opportunities for doing good, and a clearer perception of God, a fuller reception of all that makes heaven what it is. The reward is like imparting a new sense. We live in the universe like one born blind. He enjoys many things; he feels the warmth of the sunshine, but the exquisite glories of color in flower and forest, the splendor of the sky, the infinite reach of sight are unknown till his eyes are opened. Then while in the same place and surrounded by the same things as before, he has entered a new world. There are many such spheres around us, one beyond the other, each one more glorious than the one within. Some are opened at conversion, others by various Christian experiences, and still there is more to follow. And the only way to have

48. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming ;

49. And shall begin to smite *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken ;

50. The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

51. And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites : ¹ there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

over all that he hath. But if 48 that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord tarrieth; and shall begin to beat his 49 fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall 50 come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and 51 shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

¹ Matt. 8:12; 25:30.

our eyes opened to them is by faithfulness in the lesser sphere. To him that hath shall be given. He that is faithful in the least shall receive the much. — *P.*

WATCHING. We see by this illustration of Christ what he means by watching, — faithful performance of duty, as if God himself were ever present, with hope and joy in the thought of his coming.

IV. **Illustrated by the Unfaithful Servant.** — Vers. 48-51. 48. If that evil servant shall say in his heart. He would be ashamed to say it openly. Many an evil lurks in the heart which would appall us if spoken. But the wickedness of the heart soon manifests itself in the conduct. My lord delayeth his coming: and so will have no knowledge of his servant's conduct.

49. And shall begin to smite his fellow servants: not only neglecting their interests, but actually abusing them in the spirit of a petty tyrant. He struts about as if he were master, and lords it over them. — *Morison.* He abuses where he should give nourishment. The fellow-servants here must be understood of such as are faithful servants of their absent master. — *Lange.* They were abused *because* they were faithful. And to eat and drink with the drunken: carousing at his master's expense, instead of keeping the household in order, and exercising a prudent economy. — *Broadus.* So the unfaithful minister and Christian takes the very means God has put in his hands for the aid of his cause, and the blessing of men, and misappropriates them to selfish uses. — *P.* Under the rule of such a steward, the household generally is to some extent given over to wickedness. Such a dissolute hospitality, also, is signified, as makes all drunkards from without welcome. — *Lange.* The two forms of sin most common to those in high places are oppression and self-indulgence. — *Abbott.* Tyranny over others goes hand in hand with laxity toward ourselves. Persecution of others implies a wrong in us. — *P.* The great historical contrast between the Inquisition and Indulgences will easily occur to the reader. — *Lange.*

50. The lord of that servant. Christ is still "lord" of the unfaithful and sinful servant. Shall come. Doubt of his coming does not hinder it. In a day, etc. The unexpected, sudden coming is again brought forward. To the unfaithful our Lord often comes suddenly in this world, to correct while hope of amendment remains; but ver. 51 refers to something final. Before the second advent, when the whole church shall be tried as to faithfulness, the coming to individuals is at death. — *Rev. Com.*

51. And shall cut him asunder: literally, *shall cut him in two.* A terrific form of capital punishment, carried sometimes into execution with a saw. (See 2 Sam. 12:31; Heb. 11:37.) It represents here a doom too dreadful to be capable of explicit representation and explanation. — *Morison.* And appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: as referred to in the last lesson. He must go with the hypocrites because he is one. Each to his own place. — *P.* "Even the Rabbins send the hypocrites to Gehenna." The wicked servant is a hypocrite, not only because he thinks to present himself at last under the guise of fidelity, and must have showed false colors from the beginning (*Meyer*), but especially because in his ill-treatment of the fellow-servants, he assumes the semblance of official zeal. — *Lange.* There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is a phrase often used to denote the bitterest agony and convulsions of pain and rage. — *Jacobus.* Cutting asunder indicates destruction; weeping and gnashing of teeth, a living in suffering. — *Abbott.*

THE WICKED SERVANT. The evil servant becomes a *practical disbeliever* in Christ's second coming, uses his power to oppress his fellow-servants, and to gratify himself, finds his companions with the self-indulgent, not with the self-denying; and to him judgment comes suddenly (Matt. 7:26, 27), unexpectedly, without warning, and with terrible and

final condemnation, that separates him from the saints, and allots his portion with sinners. Compare Ezek. 34. — *Abbott*.

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PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Ver. 42-44. Such infinite issues depend upon life that it is of the utmost importance to be always watching and ready.
2. We are to watch against sudden temptations, against insidious influences to evil, against unfaithfulness, against a wrong spirit, against pride, against all the wiles of the devil.
3. We are to watch and be ready for the coming of the Lord, for the hour of death, for the crises of our lives, for opportunities, for ways and means of doing good.
4. The coming of the Lord is certain; the time of the coming is uncertain to us.
5. The uncertainty of the time is an inspiration to duty. Thus "the *future* has an immediate influence on the present." — *Parker*.
6. "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries. — *Shakespeare*.
7. Vers. 45-47. The true way to watch is to do every duty faithfully.
8. The only way to promotion is through faithful service in lesser things.
9. Ver. 47. The true servant of God possesses all things. "All things are yours, because ye are Christ's."
10. Vers. 48-51. An unfaithful heart will lead to unfaithful conduct.
11. Be sure your sin of unfaithfulness will find you out.
12. The only way to be prepared when the Lord comes is to be always prepared.
13. Laxity to ourselves is often accompanied by severity toward others.
14. Every person at last must go to his own place and his own rewards.
15. The punishment of the wicked is final and terrible.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

CONNECT this lesson with the last, going back to the last words of Jesus in the temple.

A WORD PICTURE of the scene, as Jesus views the temple buildings, and foretells their destruction; the slow, sad walk up the sloping side of Olivet; then on its heights, in full view of Jerusalem and the temple, Jesus speaks the earnest words of prophecy and exhortation to his disciples, of which our lesson is a part.

READ the whole of the chapter. This lesson cannot be understood without a view of the facts on which it is founded; as we cannot understand a roof or tower without taking into view the whole edifice on which it is built.

SUBJECT, — CHRISTIAN WATCHFULNESS.

I. WATCH (ver. 42). What it means; watch for what; against what. In what ways men are put to sleep spiritually. The two kinds of temptation, — (1) the sudden, like a storm; (2) the insidious, like malaria or cold, — and how to watch against each.

Illustration. Argus is fabled to have had one hundred eyes, only two of which ever slept at once. Jupiter sent Mercury to slay him, but he could not reach him unawares. At last Mercury took the form of a shepherd, and played such charming music on his Pandean pipes, and told him such interesting stories, that the hundred eyes were all closed in sleep, and Mercury cut off his head with a single stroke. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Foster's *Cyclopædia of Illustrations*, 5981.

II. WATCH, BECAUSE CHRIST'S COMING WILL BE UNEXPECTED (vers. 42-44).

SCRIPTURE EXHORTATIONS. 1 Pet. 4: 7; 5: 8. Rev. 3: 3; 16: 15. Matt. 25: 13. Mark 13: 33-37. Luke 12: 35-38; 21: 36. 1 Cor. 10: 12; 16: 13. Rom. 13: 11. 1 Thes. 5: 4. Heb. 2: 1; 12: 15.

THE COMING OF THE LORD. Its meaning, its power to lead us to watch. See *Explanatory*.

Illustration. "Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes on forever between that darkness and that light."—*F. R. Lowell.*

Illustration. There is an Eastern fable that a man waited 1000 years before the gates of paradise, watching continuously for them to open, so that he might enter, and then fell asleep for one short hour. But during that hour the gates opened and were shut again, and he was left out.

UNEXPECTED CRISES IN OUR LIVES. Almost all openings for business, the opportunities for larger usefulness, for new work, come to us unexpectedly; and if we are unprepared, they pass by us forever.

III. WATCH, BY THE FAITHFUL PERFORMANCE OF DUTY (vers. 45-47). In these verses is given an illustration of true watchfulness. Not sitting still, and neglecting duty in the anxiety to meet the Lord, but doing duty as faithfully as if the Lord were present.

NOTICE the reward of faithfulness, — larger capacities, larger opportunities, both for joy and service.

ALL THINGS ARE OURS, if we are faithful, as is promised in 1 Cor. 3: 21-23. (1) They are ours as this country is ours, because all its wealth and power, its armies and navies, are pledged for our defence. (2) All is ours to enjoy, as pictures, landscapes, are for all. The whole of God's universe is open to us, if we are God's loving children.

IV. WATCH, FOR DESTRUCTION FOLLOWS CLOSE UPON NEGLECT (vers. 48-51).

Illustration. Sleeping on guard is ever punished with death, because on the carefulness of the watch may depend the safety of the army and the nation.

Illustration. The excellent little story *Parley the Porter*, published as a tract, by the American Tract Society, is an unusually effective illustration for children, as to the duty of watching, the danger of neglect, and the way in which people are put off their guard.

LESSON IV.—APRIL 22.

THE TEN VIRGINS.—MATT. 25: 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*And they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut.*—MATT. 25: 10.

TIME.—Tuesday afternoon, April 4; immediately following the last lesson.

PLACE.—On the Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTORY.

This parable is closely joined to the preceding exhortations to be prepared for the coming of the Lord (our last lesson); indeed, it is another form of impressing and enforcing the same truth. "It is one of the most beautiful and touching of the parables. Poetry, painting, and the drama have combined to give it an exceptional hold on the Christian imagination. The weird pathos of the story is unspeakable. The occasion is so happy, the agents so interesting, the issue so tragic."—*Prof. Bruce.*

1. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet ¹the bridegroom.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the

¹ Eph. 5: 29, 30. Rev. 19: 7; 21: 2, 9.

EXPLANATORY.

1. **Then:** at the coming of the Lord (24: 42, 44).

THE WEDDING FEAST. The rewards of the Gospel are like a wedding feast, rich, abundant, varied, exquisitely delightful, social, strengthening. "They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet quaff immortality and joy."—*Milton.* "The marriage supper of the Lamb; scene of unrivalled glory, of exhaustless joy; rich and rare the food provided for

the guests in the great banqueting-hall of immortality! Other viands at other feasts pall on the sated sense; but for those viands upon which the spirits of the blessed shall for evermore be nourished into a growing likeness unto God, the appetite shall ever grow quicker the more that is partaken, and the relish be ever the more intense."—*Hanna*. **Shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins.** The condition of the church at the end of the world shall be like the condition of the ten virgins described in the parable.—*Carr*.

THE MARRIAGE CUSTOMS OF THE EAST. The parable of the ten virgins is based upon the marriage customs of the East, to which many allusions occur in Scripture. The essence of the marriage ceremony consisted in the removal of the bride from her home to that of her future husband. The bridegroom proceeded, late in the evening, attended by his friends, or "groomsman" (see Judg. 14: 11; Matt. 9: 15; John 3: 29), to the bride's dwelling, where she awaited him, attired in white robes (Rev. 19: 8) embroidered with gold (Ps. 45: 13) and perfumed (Ps. 45: 8), adorned with jewels (Isa. 61: 10), and attended by her "bridesmaids" (Ps. 45: 14). The whole company then went in procession by torchlight to the bridegroom's house, being joined on the way by parties of invited guests (the virgins of the parable), all carrying torches or lamps.—*Stock*. Music, torches, and every demonstration of joy accompanied the train. When the bridegroom's house was reached, the procession entered, including the invited guests; the door was then closed, and no one arriving subsequently was permitted to enter. The marriage contract was then signed, and the party sat down to the feast. At the close of the meal came the nuptial benediction, pronounced according to a prescribed form, by the bridegroom himself. The accompanying festivities, however, lasted for days, sometimes for a fortnight.—*Abbott*. **The ten virgins.** This is merely a round number. Ten lamps or torches were the usual number in marriage processions.—*Lange*. The use of this number, so common among the Jews, very likely originated in "the original arithmetic of the ten fingers." The structure of the parable required virgins in this place, in order that the picture might be true to nature. In the customs apparently of all times and all countries, this position at a marriage feast is assigned to young unmarried women.—*Arnot*.

THE TEN VIRGINS symbolize the whole professed body of the followers of Christ, including the true disciples and those who have made the profession without the possession of true religion. As *Abbott* says: "The parable represents the virgins as they appear to the bystander, the disciples as they appear to the world."

Which took their lamps. The lamps consisted of a round receptacle for pitch or oil for the wick. This was placed in a hollow cup or deep saucer—the *Beth Shiqqua*—which was fastened by a pointed end into a long wooden pole, on which it was borne aloft.—*Edersheim*. In the utterly dark streets of an Asiatic city every one who goes forth at night is expected, and in modern Jerusalem is strictly required by the authorities, to carry a light.—*Broadus*.

THE LAMP, with its flames, symbolizes whatever is outward in the profession of Christianity.—*Trench*. It includes the outward forms, the intellectual knowledge, the visible expressions in word and action, of the true inward Christian life. **And went forth to meet the bridegroom.** Went forth from their homes to meet and join the procession as it moved from the house of the bride to the home of the bridegroom, where the wedding feast was held. They would meet at a convenient place on the route, and there wait in some shelter or private dwelling till the procession drew near. *Arnot* illustrates this by the custom which prevails at funerals in the rural districts of Scotland. "When the distance between the house of the deceased and the cemetery is considerable, a common, perhaps I should say a uniform, practice is that those friends of the mourning family who reside in the neighborhood of the burying-place assemble in a group at a convenient turning of the road, and wait till the funeral procession reaches the spot; they then silently fall into their places and follow the corpse to the grave."

THE BRIDEGROOM represents Christ himself, coming to this world for his bride, the church.

ANOTHER VIEW. *Edersheim* and *Goebel* regard the feast as held at the bride's house, as was sometimes the case. It is here that the virgins assemble to wait for the bridegroom, who is coming from a long distance to claim his bride. From this house they are to go forth when the announcement of his coming is made. In this case the foolish virgins took their lamps with them, with wicks, but no oil; "symbolizing the entire absence of personal preparation." They expected that here they could fill their lamps, when the time came, from some common stock of oil. When they lighted their wicks, with no oil, the flame quickly went out, and they tried in vain to obtain oil. The *advantages* of this view are (1) that it

2. ¹ And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

3. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them :

4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

bridegroom. And five of them 2 were foolish, and five were wise. For the foolish, when they 3 took their lamps, took no oil with them: but the wise took 4 oil in their vessels with their

¹ Matt. 13: 47; 22: 10.

typifies best Christ's coming to this world for his bride the church; (2) that the virgins would not be likely to sleep by the wayside; (3) the representation seems more perfect of the oil, as the true grace and spirit of God, being entirely neglected. *On the contrary*, (1) it would be very strange that no oil could be found in a bride's house; (2) the representation is that they had oil in their lamps, but not an extra supply in other vessels; and if they were waiting at the bride's house, they would not need to light their lamps till they started out, and thus there would be no burning out of the lamps. (3) As Professor Bruce says, "On this view it is difficult to see why the foolish virgins trimmed, that is to say, lighted, their lamps." (4) The explanation of the meaning of the oil is even better on the other theory, as will be seen. — *P.*

2. **And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.** The whole church at the time of Christ's coming (as it is at all times) will be divided into these two classes, nominal and real Christians. — *Rev. Com.* **Five.** Nothing can be argued from the *number* here in regard to the proportion of sincere Christians among professors. — *Barnes.* For the proportion will vary at different times. **Wise:** prudent, intelligent, foreseeing, with good judgment. To be an earnest Christian, doing the Lord's will, busy in his service, filled with his spirit, and thus prepared for his coming, is true wisdom. **Foolish:** stupid, lacking in discretion and forethought, without good judgment and common sense. Such is a true description of those who are merely professors of religion, who have no real spiritual life, but content themselves with the husks of religion, without its inner blessedness or outward usefulness.

3. **They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil (olive oil) with them.** In addition to the small supply their lamps would contain when they first started out. Doubtless, indeed, they would have oil in their lamps as they went forth. They would go forth *with their lamps lighted*; for it would be already dark. It was night. But they did not calculate on the possibility of a long delay; and hence they did not make provision for maintaining as long as might be needed the light of their lamps. They were quite positive, in all likelihood, that no great provision was requisite. — *Morison.* Moreover, extra flasks of oil would be lumbering and fettering, very far from ornamental, and unpleasant in many ways to those dressed in their holiday attire.

4. **But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.** They considered that it was really uncertain at what particular hour the bridegroom would make his appearance. He had not fixed the hour. He had to come, besides, from a great distance, a far country. Possibly he might be detained till very late. Hence, to meet every contingency, they took a full supply of oil in their cruses, or flasks. With a lamp in the one hand, and a vessel in the other, there would be enough to try their patience. But it was right to be fully prepared for all contingencies. — *Morison.*

OBSERVE that in the outset no distinction is *visible* between the wise and foolish virgins; both have lamps burning, but the wise have the lasting supply of oil (grace), the foolish have not. So in the church no visible line separates those whose light is fed by their own resolution from those whose dependence is a continual supply of daily grace from God. — *Abbott.*

OBSERVE that the wicked servant in the parable, Matt. 24: 48, thinks the Lord delays, so watches not for his coming; here the foolish virgin thinks he is coming immediately, so makes no provision of oil; an indication that a sinful heart can find, in directly contrary beliefs, excuses for the same real neglect. — *Abbott.*

THE OIL IN THE LAMPS. It is clear that whatever is merely outward in the Christian profession is the lamp; whatever is inward and spiritual is the oil laid up in the vessels. — *Buller.* The oil is the character and principle, the spiritual life, the heart, which are the source of the flame, the visible manifestations of the Christian spirit. And as these are created and supported by the Holy Spirit, his influences are also typified by the oil.

THE FOOLISH VIRGINS, therefore, are those who have had some feelings of attachment to the Lord Jesus, and certain impulses Christ-ward, to which they yielded at the time, but

5. While the bridegroom tarried, ¹ they all slumbered and slept.

6. And at midnight ² there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

lamps. Now while the bride- 5
groom tarried, they all slum-
bered and slept. But at mid- 6
night there is a cry, Behold,
the bridegroom! Come ye

¹ Thess. 5: 6. ² Matt. 24: 31. 1 Thess. 4: 16.

they are not constant. Their emotion was a real thing, and when they were acting upon it you could not call them hypocrites; but it was not the right thing. They were animated by impulse alone, not by principle and conviction. Their religion was a thing of the surface. In the parable of the Sower they are represented by the seed which fell upon rocky ground. "The same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for awhile: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended" (Matt. 13: 5, 6, 20, 21). They are represented also by those who built a tower, and were unable to finish (Luke 14: 28-32).—*Wm. M. Taylor.*

THE WISE VIRGINS are, of course, true Christians, whose hearts have been renewed, who are filled with the love of Jesus, and live in the Spirit; who, "in their union to the Holy Spirit, formed by their faith in Christ, and maintained by their constant study of his word, their habitual dependence on him in prayer, and their continuous obedience to his commands, have that unfailing supply of strength by which they are sustained in every duty and prepared for every emergency."

5. While the bridegroom tarried. As they were waiting for him; an allusion to the possible delay of the Lord beyond the expectation of the apostles. Christ's coming will be unexpected by all, even by those who make calculations about it.—*Rev. Com.* Every coming of the Lord is sudden and unexpected. Even the death of a friend over whose incurable sickness we have long watched always comes with a sudden shock. They all slumbered and slept. The wise as well as the foolish. The word *slumbered* signifies, simply, "nodded," or, "became drowsy"; while the word *slept* is the usual word for "lying down to sleep"; denoting two stages of spiritual declension—first that half-involuntary lethargy or drowsiness which is apt to steal over one who falls into inactivity; and then a conscious, deliberate yielding to it, after a little vain resistance. Such was the state alike of the wise and the foolish virgins, even till the cry of the bridegroom's approach awoke them.—*J., F. and B.* Many others think that no such meaning is attached to the sleep of the virgins, but that it was merely "necessary to the imagery of the parable. The image is satisfied by supposing all to be in a state in which the advent of the bridegroom could not be foreseen. The watchfulness of the wise virgins consisted, not in knowing when the bridegroom was coming, but in being prepared when he came suddenly."—*Cook.* No blame is attached to them for sleeping, and sleep is a natural and necessary act. "It represents ignorance as to the time of Christ's coming."—*Carr.* The *slumbering* and *sleeping* of the virgins very happily illustrates the peaceful confidence of the truly prepared and waiting disciples on the one hand, and the false security and stupidity of the mere nominal and unprepared professor on the other.—*G. W. Clark.*

OBSERVE the implication: if the Christian has grace in his heart, he is always ready, though asleep; if not, he is unready, though he were wakeful and seemingly watching. Not what death *finds us doing*, but how death *finds us furnished*, is the important question.—*Abbott.*

6. And at midnight: a late, dark season, much later than the custom, and hence than had been expected. There was a cry made. Either by heralds. "This was the custom, to have a crier go before the bridegroom, and give notice aloud of his coming. Sometimes part of the retinue ran before, and gave the public tidings."—*Jacobus.* Or it was "the cry of the people who see him coming a little way off. They are made aware of his approach from seeing the light of the torches or lamps carried by those who accompanied him in the procession."—*Meyer.* Snatches, too, of the joyous music, sounding from afar under the silence of the stars, would be falling already on their ears. All is stir. The excitement speedily rises into enthusiasm.—*Morison.*

THE COMING OF THE BRIDEGROOM. This parable will obtain a wider application if we keep in memory that, while it is quite true that there is one great coming of the Lord at the last, yet not the less does he come in all the great crises of his church, at each new manifestation of his Spirit; and at each of these, too, there is a separation among those who are called by his name, into wise and foolish, as they are spiritually alive or dead. Thus at Pentecost, when by his Spirit he returned to his church, he came: the prudent in Israel

7. ¹Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

9. But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and ²the door was shut.

forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriagefeast:

¹ Luke 12: 35.² Luke 13: 25.

went in with him to the feast; the foolish tarried without. Thus, too, he came at the Reformation. Each of these was an example of what shall be more signally fulfilled at the end. — *Trench*. He comes to us at every great crisis of our lives: at the opening of some great opportunity, in the hour of great trouble, in the hour of death.

CHARACTER REVEALED BY EMERGENCY. It is in moments of surprise that a man's true self comes out to view. Nothing will more correctly reveal what is in a man than the coming upon him of some crushing and unlooked-for crisis (as peril of army to general, or storm to mariner, affliction, commercial crisis). It was a shrewd remark of Andrew Fuller, that a man has only as much religion as he can command in trial. In mercy the minor surprises have been sent to show ourselves to us before the last and greatest one. — *Wm. M. Taylor*.

7. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. The lamps, laid against the wall, had of course been kept burning all the time that the virgins had been waiting and sleeping, for they did not know the moment when they might require to issue forth to meet the procession. As, however, they had been burning long, they required trimming and replenishing. — *Morison*.

TRIMMING OUR LAMPS. Every one at the last prepares to give an account of his works, inquires into the foundation of his faith, seriously searches whether his life has been one which will have praise, not merely of men, for that he now feels will avail nothing, but also of God. Many put off this trying of the grounds of their faith, and hope to the last moment; nay, some manage to defer it, with all the miserable discoveries which will then be made, beyond the grave, even till the day of judgment; but further it cannot be deferred. — *Trench*.

8. Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out: rather, as in the Rev. Ver., *are going out*, for want of oil. Their religion of emotion and excitement, their religion of forms and ceremonies, their faith without works, failed them in the hour of need.

9. Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you. The reply is not selfish, even in the figure, for there was not **enough for us and you**. To have divided the oil would have entirely defeated the purpose of the procession. — *Rev. Com.* No doubt the wise virgins were sorry; but it took all their oil to fill their own lamps. In the fact which the parable typifies, it was *impossible* for the wise to give their oil to the foolish. — *P.* "How fondly in such a crisis the empty lean on the full." — *Arnot*. But go ye rather to them that sell: to the only and true source of supply. In the interpretation this can only be to God and Jesus Christ, who alone can give the new heart and the true preparation for heaven. "The true interpretation is found in Isa. 55: 1 and Rev. 3: 18."

SPIRITUAL QUALITIES NOT TRANSFERABLE. Personal character cannot be given by one man to another. You cannot give me your patience to support me in the hour of my anguish. I cannot give you my courage for the discharge of dangerous duty. There is much, indeed, we can and ought to do for each other. But we cannot give to any one the qualities which we ourselves possess, but in which he is deficient. — *Wm. M. Taylor*.

10. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came. Usually we cannot prepare for the testing times of life at the moment. When the opportunity to rule the "ten cities" comes, we are not prepared to do it, unless we have faithfully used the "ten talents." The great leader, unexpectedly brought to the front, has been practically preparing for his great work for years, by his faithfulness in lesser things. When the great work of our lives comes to us, we shall fail, unless our past life has been preparing us for it. The death-bed is the poorest time for repentance, and *the oil must be stored up long before that feeds our lamps in these crises of our lives*. We cannot go at the hour, and buy. — *P.* And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: rather, to the *marriage banquet*,

11. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying,

¹ Lord, Lord, open to us.

12. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, ² I know you not.

13. ³ Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

and the door was shut. After-
ward came also the other vir-
gins, saying, Lord, Lord, open
to us. But he answered and
said, Verily I say unto you, I
know you not. Watch there-
fore, for ye know not the day
nor the hour.

¹ Matt. 7: 21-23.

² Ps. 5: 5. Hab. 1: 13. John 9: 31.

³ Matt. 24: 42, 44. Mark 13: 33, 35.

1 Cor. 16: 13. 1 Thess. 5: 6. Rev. 16: 15.

the blessedness for which they had come forth (see on ver. 1). **And the door was shut.** The door was usually in the middle of one side of a house, leading by a passage under the second story to the inner court, upon which all the rooms of the house opened. When this outer door was shut, all connection with the outer world was cut off.—*Broadus*. A few country girls arriving too late for a marriage, and being therefore excluded from the festival, is not in itself a great event; but I know not any words in human language that teach a more piercing lesson than the conclusion of this similitude.—*Abbott*.

AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT. (1) There are abundant opportunities and pressing invitations to enter the kingdom. (2) There comes a time when it is too late to enter. (3) This is a fact of nature, as well as a truth of the word. There is a tendency to fix the character, so that one will not change. In the misuse of the body there comes a time when it is impossible to ward off disease. Age comes on, and it is impossible to learn music or a new business. (4) We shut the door against ourselves. No one but ourselves is to blame for our not entering. (5) We shut the door by neglecting to be prepared to enter.—*P*.

11. Afterward came the other virgins: as Esau came too late for the blessing, which no tears could give him.

12. I know you not: I do not recognize you as belonging to the procession and to the guests. They had not obtained the oil; they were not prepared to enter. To the marriage feast (heaven) none are admitted without light (holiness), which can be sustained only by oil (divine grace) (Eph. 5: 5; Heb. 12: 14).—*Abbott*. The door was shut, as much for the security and joy, without interruption, of those within, as for the lasting exclusion of those without (Gen. 7: 16; Rev. 3: 12).—*Trench*.

13. Watch therefore, etc.: for in a very important sense the Son of man is coming to us every hour of every day. Each new hour brings to us new duties and responsibilities from him. Have we risen to the occasion? There is a constant process going on within us, either of invigoration or deterioration; and if we meet Christ continually, as he comes to us in the common duties of a common day, we shall not be dismayed at last, when he comes in state, with the flaming outriders of his Majesty.—*Wm. M. Taylor*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Wm. M. Taylor's *The Parables of our Saviour*; Professor Bruce's *Parabolic Teaching of Christ*; Trench, Arnot, Calderwood, Bourdillon, A. L. O. E., on the *Parables*; W. Ward's *View of the Hindoos*, 2: 24 (or 3: 171, ed. 1820); Hughes' *Travels in Sicily*, 2: 20. A touching illustration of "the door was shut" is found in the little book, *The Sister's Dream of Heaven*; Tennyson's *Idyls of a King*, "The Foolish Virgins"; Schaff's *Christ in Song*, for several hymns; Foster's *Cyclopædia of Poetical Illustrations*, pp. 489, 490.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The simplest plan of teaching this lesson is the best: to follow out the story of the parable, and impress its living lessons as they are unfolded by the narrative; but chiefly the main

SUBJECT,—THE NECESSITY OF PREPARATION FOR THE FUTURE.

I. THE GOSPEL WEDDING FEAST.

Illustration. At a marriage, the procession of which I saw some years ago, the bridegroom came from a distance, and the bride lived at Serampore, to which place the bridegroom was to come by water. After waiting two or three hours, at length, near midnight, it was announced, as if in the very words of Scripture, *Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him*. All the persons employed now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands, to fill up their stations in the procession. Some of them had lost their lights,

and were unprepared; but it was then too late to seek them, and the cavalcade moved forward to the house of the bride, at which place the company entered a large and splendidly illuminated area before the house, covered with an awning, where a great multitude of friends, dressed in their best apparel, were seated upon mats. The bridegroom was carried in the arms of a friend, and placed upon a superb seat in the midst of the company, where he sat a short time, and then went into the house, the door of which was immediately shut, and guarded by sepoys. I and others expostulated with the doorkeepers, but in vain. Never was I so struck with our Lord's beautiful parable as at this moment: *and the door was shut*. I was exceedingly anxious to be present while the marriage formulas were repeated, but was obliged to depart in disappointment. — *W. Ward*, in his "View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos."

II. THE WISE VIRGINS.

III. THE FOOLISH VIRGINS.

IV. THE UNEXPECTED COMING.

"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh in the middle of the night,
And blest is he whose loins are girt, whose lamp is burning bright."

Illustration. In the house of a well-known citizen of Boston, there is an exquisite group in marble, representing the wise and foolish virgins. The wise is kneeling, in the act of trimming her lamp; and the foolish, with a face full of the most pathetic entreaty, seems begging from her a share of the oil which she is pouring in to feed the flame; but her sister, with a look of inexpressible sadness, and her hand uplifted as if to guard her treasure, is as if she were saying, "*Not so.*" It is a touching rendering of the parable; and as I looked at it, I was not surprised to be told that a famous New England essayist had said, as he was gazing at it, "*She should have given her the oil.*" Who has not often sympathized with that feeling, as he read the parable? We are apt to think that the five sisters were just a little stingy. But said the owner of the group to the man of genius, "If you and your neighbor have each signed a bill for a certain sum to fall due on a certain date, and you by dint of economy and perseverance have been able to lay by just enough to meet your own obligation, while your neighbor, wasting his hours on trifles, has made no provision for the day of settlement; and if, on the morning when the bills fall due, he should come beseeching you to give him some of your money to help him pay his debt, would you give it to him?" — *Wm. M. Taylor*. In real life there is no opportunity for this selfishness, for however much we may desire it, it is *impossible* to impart the necessary preparation.

V. AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT.

Illustrations. (1) The story of the sibyl's offer to sell the nine books to King Tarquin of Rome. (2) Southey's poem, *The Inchcape Rock*. (3) No more effective appeal can be made to a class, than the reading to them of the tract, *The Sister's Dream of Heaven*, or Tennyson's *Foolish Virgins*.

LESSON V. — APRIL 29.

THE TALENTS. — MATT. 25 : 14-30.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* — REV. 2 : 10.

TIME. — Tuesday afternoon, April 4, A.D. 30, at the close of Christ's last day of public ministry. The same time as the last lesson.

PLACE. — The Mount of Olives.

ANALOGOUS PARABLES. — In an abbreviated form in Mark 13 : 34-36. A similar parable of the pounds in Luke 19 : 11-27, but spoken on a different occasion, and inculcating a different aspect of the truth. The same lesson is enforced by the barren fig-tree (Luke 13 : 6-9).

INTRODUCTION.

This parable is closely connected not only in time, but in its teaching, with that in our last lesson. As Trench says: The virgins were represented as *waiting* for the Lord; we have here the servants *working* for him. There the inward spiritual rest of the Christian was described; here, his external activity. There, by the end of the foolish virgins, we are warned against declensions and delays in the inward spiritual life; here, against sluggishness and sloth in our outward vocation and work. There, the foolish virgins failed *from thinking their part too easy*; here, the wicked servant fails *from thinking his too hard*. — *Alford*.

14. ¹ For the kingdom of heaven is ² as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; ³ to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

For it is as when a man, ¹⁴ going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five ¹⁵ talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he

¹ Luke 19: 12.² Matt. 21: 33.³ Rom. 12: 6.

1 Cor. 12: 7, 11, 29.

Eph. 4: 11.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Groundwork of the Parable. — It is needful for the right understanding of its outward circumstances, that we keep in mind the relation of masters and slaves in antiquity. Then slaves were often artisans, or were allowed otherwise to engage freely in business, paying, as it was frequently arranged, a fixed yearly sum to their master; or, as here, they had money given to them wherewith to trade on his account, or with which to enlarge their business, and to bring him in a share of their profits. — *Trench.* The slaves of the Greeks and Romans were often men of varied mental attainments or considerable manual skill; and such of them as were clever artisans, efficient doctors, or ready amanuenses, would command high prices. — See *Smith's Dict. of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, Art. "Servus."

II. The Entrusted Talents. — Vers. 14, 15. 14. For the kingdom of heaven: this is not in the original, but is naturally supplied from ver. 1, since the same subject is continued under another illustration. Is as a man travelling into a far country. He was going abroad, and therefore had to leave his affairs in competent hands.

THE HOUSEHOLDER represents Jesus Christ, who was about to leave his disciples and go to heaven, which was a "far country" in the sense that his servants could not have visible communication with him. It was to be a long time before he returned to rule in his earthly kingdom. Who called his own servants: see above. These upper servants, or slaves, were to a large landholder what the under officers of a government are to the king.

THE SERVANTS denote first of all the apostles, and then all Christ's professed followers, and all who have received from Christ the privileges and blessings of his Gospel. "But as all men without distinction ought to be his servants, the principle of the parable is applicable, in a certain important plane of representation, to men without exception." — *Morison.* And delivered unto them his goods: his property, so far as it might be available for trading purposes; his *floating capital* as it were. — *Morison.* It was in the form of money, talents.

THE TALENTS were not specifically the means of obtaining grace for one's self, but generically the means of diffusing, or of rendering available to self and to others, the divine grace or graciousness; the means, that is to say, of promoting at once the interests of the kingdom of heaven on earth, and the terrestrial wealth, honor, and glory of the King of the kingdom. — *Morison.* Among these talents are the Gospel itself, the truths Christ preached, training, energy, education, skill, Christian experience, health, wealth, time, opportunities, power of preaching and teaching, all the gifts and endowments of the Holy Spirit. The day of Pentecost was one special season of distributing the talents. Dr. Bushnell says that the capacity for religion, of knowing God, of love, of faith, of being illuminated and guided by God, is the highest talent we have. — *P.*

15. And unto one he gave five talents. A talent was 3,000 shekels, and as the weight of the Jewish shekel is variously estimated, there is considerable variation in the value given to the talent, from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Several Bible dictionaries give the amount as \$1,642.50, in which case the five talents would be worth about \$8,212, if the talents were of silver. Since a talent is a weight, not a coin, if the talents were of gold, they would be worth as many times more as gold was then valued above silver; i.e., according to the *Encyc. Brit.*, 10 or 12 times as much. But that they were talents of silver is shown by the last word in ver. 18, where money is, in the Greek, *silver*. To another two: or \$3,285. To every man according to his several ability: or capacity, in proportion as he deemed them qualified for larger or smaller administration. — *Edersheim.* The natural gifts are as the vessel, which may be large or small and which receives according to its capacity; but which in each case is filled. — *Trench.* Took his journey: representing Christ as leaving the earth in his bodily presence, and sitting on the right hand of his Father in heaven.

16. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents.

17. And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two.

18. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents : behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

went on his journey. Straight- 16
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talents went and traded with
them, and made other five tal-
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APPLICATIONS. 1. The consummation of the kingdom will be long enough deferred to leave ample time to work. — *Prof. Bruce*. 2. It is the duty of Christians to be working instead of sleeping, while waiting, like the ten virgins, for the coming of the Lord. See 2 Thess. 3 : 11, 12. 3. Religion does not make all Christians alike, nor give them the same work to do. There is an infinite variety of endowments, and great differences of capacity both in kind and degree, and a great diversity in the matter of opportunity for service. 4. Each has precisely what is fitted to his ability and circumstances, — no more, no less. Every man has just as many opportunities of service as he can use with advantage. — *Taylor*. 5. He that has the least has a great deal. A single talent was a large amount of money, and worth at that time ten times as much as the same amount of money now. 6. There is a most reasonable wisdom in the distribution. No one is over-taxed ; of no one is more required than he can perform ; but also no one has unemployed faculties. Every cup is even full. 7. It is of importance that we should remember this principle ; for there are few things that so paralyze the energy of the soul as, on the one hand, pride because our sphere is so large ; and, on the other, discontent because it is so limited. — *Taylor*. 8. The receiving of talents from God is an exceedingly great privilege. — *P*.

III. **The Man with Five Talents.** — Vers. 16, 19-21. 16. Then : the "straightway" of the last verse belongs at the beginning of this, — *straightway he went*. It thus teaches the great lesson of urgency and promptitude. It says to us, the demands of the kingdom are very pressing ; to work then at once without delay ; to be prompt in action is a cardinal virtue in the kingdom. — *Bruce*. **And traded with the same :** literally, *worked* ; then in a technical sense, *engaged in business*, and so *traded*. The men who conduct large business operations have to work indeed. Brain work is often far more intense and severe than hand work. — *Broadus*.

THE TRADING is the wise and earnest use of all the talents God has entrusted to us, in accomplishing his work and aiding the progress of his kingdom. **And made them other five talents.** Omit the *them*. He gained five talents. In an honest business way he doubled his capital. In all true bargains the other side gains as well. A good bargain is one that is good for both parties.

INCREASING SPIRITUAL CAPITAL. Both the capacity and the entrusted talents are increased by proper use. God gives larger opportunities, fuller measures of the Spirit, more important work, new spheres of action, to those who have increased their ability to use them.

19. **After a long time :** long in the history of the whole church, and long enough in the case of individuals, to allow them to make good use of the trust. Another intimation that the coming of the Lord may be long delayed (compare 24 : 48). — *Rev. Com.* **The Lord of those servants cometh.** He was gone a long time, but he was sure to return.

THE RETURN OF THE LORD refers doubtless first of all to the second coming of Christ, when he will judge the world in righteousness. But here, as we have seen in former lessons, there are many comings, — in every crisis of life, in hours of trouble and trial, and especially in the hour of death. **And reckoneth with them :** has a settlement. They are to report what they have done with the talents entrusted to them. It is THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

20. **Behold I have gained beside them five talents more.** Here it is *I* have gained. In Luke it is, "Thy pound hath gained five pounds." Both statements are true. All gain in spiritual things is both ours and God's ; whether in personal experience (1 Cor. 15 : 10 ; Phil. 2 : 12, 13) or in Christian work (John 15 : 5 ; 1 Cor. 3 : 9) we are co-laborers

21. His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, ¹ I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou ² into the joy of thy lord.

22. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

23. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few

talents. His lord said unto ²¹ him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that ²² received the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents. His lord said unto him, ²³ Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set

¹ Matt. 24 : 47. Luke 12 : 44; 22 : 29, 30. ² 2 Tim. 2 : 12. Heb. 12 : 2. 1 Pet. 1 : 8.

with God. His talent makes a gain; yet we also make it, but always *upon* his talents; *i. e.*, by their means. — *Abbott*. Without Christ we can do nothing; with Christ we can do all things.

21. **Well done, good and faithful servant.** He commends not the acquisition but the fidelity. "Faithfulness, not success, is rewarded." — *Alford*. **Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.** In the kingdom of glory; or, on the other theory, during the millennium. An intimation that there is enlarged activity as well as rest in the future world. — *Rev. Conn.* In the similar parable given in Luke (19), the reward is more definite, — to be ruler over five or ten cities.

FIRST REWARD OF FAITHFULNESS. A larger sphere of usefulness and responsibility, increased power, greater influence. All the joys of imparting good, of helping others, are multiplied. We constantly see this illustrated in this life. Faithfulness in the smaller sphere ever leads to a larger sphere, to new activities, to grander opportunities, to more splendid achievements. Thus, and thus only, can one become ruler over many things. More of the forces of nature are obedient to him, more of the influences over men are subject to his control. Even those which to the unfaithful bring ruin will be made to aid him in his work of good. All this is infinitely more true of the future life, and finds its perfect fulfilment there. — *P.*

SECOND REWARD OF FAITHFULNESS. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord: participate in my joy and share with me in my pleasure. It is thought by many that the figure here is that of a master making a great feast, and inviting his servants who had proved faithful to enter into its enjoyment. Such occasions were sometimes signalized by giving freedom to those servants who sat down with their master. — *G. W. Clark*. Leighton's words on this entering into the joy of the Lord are beautiful: "It is but little we can receive here, some drops of joy that enter into *us*, but there *we* shall enter into joy, as vessels put into a sea of happiness." The joy of the Lord Jesus Christ, of which the faithful, like him, shall partake in some measure here, and in its fulness hereafter, is (1) the joy of a free activity in doing right, like the joy of motion in health, like the song of a bird in the morning. (2) The joy of entire consecration and submission to God. (3) The joy of doing good, of self-denial for others. (4) The joy of perfect faith in a wise and loving God, committing everything to his care. (5) Joy in the conscious love of God to us, communion and friendship with him. (6) The joy of loving others. (7) The joy of seeing others saved. (8) The joy of victory. (9) In the end, outward delights and pleasures to correspond with the inward joy. — *P.*

APPLICATIONS. 1. It is natural to talents to seek employment and use: the orator burns to speak, the true singer wants to sing. 2. The best use of what we have is the only way to more. 3. This is a great comfort to those with small talents, for there is no limit to their enlargement by faithfulness. 4. For every talent we must render an account. 5. God will say "well done" only to those who have done well. There are no empty compliments in the day of judgment.

IV. The Man with Two Talents. — Vers. 17, 22, 23. 22. **He also that had received two talents . . . gained two other talents.** He was as faithful and as successful as the one who had received five talents. He would soon be equal to any one who had received five talents, but had not made so good a use of them. All depends on the *ratio of faithfulness*. The progress is by geometrical progression. Even he who had received but one talent could have surpassed in a short time one who used five with less faithfulness. What an inspiration to use to the best of our ability all that God has entrusted to us! — *P.*

23. **Well done, good and faithful servant.** This second servant, morally viewed,

things, I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed :

25. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth : lo, *there* thou hast *that is* thine.

thee over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. And he also that had received 24 the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter : and I was afraid, and 25 went away and hid thy talent in the earth : lo, thou hast

was in all respects as noble a man as the first. His vessel could not hold as much, indeed, as the other's, but it was as full. It is not mere capacity on which Jesus smiles congratulation and commendation. It is the right use of capacity. — *Morison*. In spiritual things faithfulness is success. All faithful servants inherit the same heaven of bliss ; but there are different degrees of bliss adapted to the capacities. — *Rev. Com.*

V. **The Man with One Talent.** — Vers. 18, 24-30. 18. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth. Hiding treasure in the ground was a very common plan for safe keeping, in a land where there were few banks or places of deposit. And hid his lord's money : Greek, *silver*. Not an active ill-doer, like the wicked servant of 24:48, but simply neglectful of the blessing given him. The one talent may represent the general influences of the Spirit of God. In our history as Christians, this one may be changed to five. — *Popular Com.*

WHY IS THE MAN WITH ONE TALENT REPRESENTED AS THE NEGLECTER ? 1. It is not because only those of small talents neglect their duty ; “for one who reflects on the history of mankind cannot but feel that sloth is by no means confined to the poorly endowed ; that, indeed, some of the most tragic examples of negligence and unprofitableness have been exhibited by the most highly gifted of men.” — *Prof. Bruce*. 2. “Probably the true reason is to enforce the doctrine of universal and exceptionless obligation. The man of one talent is represented as playing the part of idler just because he is the man who would be thought most easily excusable, the purpose being to teach that excuse for negligence will be accepted in no case, not even in the case of those whose power of service is the minimum.” — *Prof. Bruce*. 3. The man of one talent would have the most excuse for idleness. He would be tempted by discouragement at the small influence he could exert, even if he did his best. Again, he would be tempted by envy, and by a morbid fear of making mistakes. — *P.*

HIS EXCUSES. 24. Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man : that is, hard-hearted ; insensible to the feelings of others in all matters relating to money, and hence close-fisted as regarded his own, and grasping as regarded what might by hook or crook be got from others. Little was the servant thinking of the hardness and utter stoniness of his own heart, in giving utterance to such cruel insolence, falsehood, and slander. — *Morison*. Reaping where thou hast not sown : unjustly gathering for himself the fruits of other men's labors. Gathering where thou hast not strewed, or scattered. The reference of the expression is, apparently, to the husbandman's work on the threshing-floor. He first scattered over the area of the floor the loosened sheaves of grain. Then he threshed them and gathered the pure grain. *The grain was gathered where the grain-bearing stalks were scattered*. But the servant before us slanderously charged his master with seeking to gather grain where he had never scattered the grain-bearing stalks ; with seeking to get profit where he had never expended either labor or capital. What a picture he draws of a commercial “screw,” or of an unscrupulous miser, hard of hand and hard of heart. — *Morison*.

25. And I was afraid : afraid of his master's severity, and thence afraid to trade with the talent, lest he should be unsuccessful in his “adventure.” If he should be unsuccessful, how could he ever face a master so exceedingly severe, exacting, unfeeling. — *Morison*. His very accusation answers his excuse ; for if he were really afraid, how did he dare to say such unjust and insolent things to his master ? He knew that his master was kind and lenient, almost over-gentle. **Hid thy talent in the earth :** see under ver. 18.

HIDING THE TALENT. This depicts the conduct of all those who shut up their gifts from the active service of Christ, without actually prostituting them to unworthy uses. Fitly, therefore, may it at least comprehend those to whom Trench refers, who, in the early church, pleaded that they had enough to do with their own souls, and were afraid of losing them in trying to save others ; and so, instead of being the salt of the earth, thought rather of keeping their own saltiness, by withdrawing sometimes into caves and wildernesses, from all those active ministries of love by which they might have served their brethren. — *J., F. and B.*

26. His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed :

27. Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

28. Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents.

29. For *unto every one* that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance : but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

thine own. But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest. Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance : but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall

¹ Matt. 13: 12. Mark 4: 25. Luke 8: 18; 19: 26. John 15: 2.

Lo, there thou hast that is thine : implying that he himself was scrupulously just. He did not steal his Lord's money, but returned safely every farthing. — *P.* But he adds falsehood to hypocrisy ; for his skill, labor, and time were his master's, as well as the money.

THE VANITY OF HIS EXCUSES. 26. **Thou wicked and slothful servant.** The excuses which men offer for idleness, whether to others or their own consciences, are false ; the real reason is spiritual sloth. — *Abbott.* There is often a vast difference between the **EXCUSES** men make, and the real **REASONS** for their conduct. He who buried one talent would have buried five or ten, if he had had them. **Thou knewest,** etc. This sentence in the original should rather be printed as an interrogation, and rendered "*knewest thou?*" It is not an admission of the accusation of the servant, but a question of astonishment, implying, however, that even if the charge were true, the servant was not therefore justified in his conduct. — *Cook.* It means, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee" (Luke 19: 22).

27. **Thou oughtest therefore :** if you believed I am such a man as you say. **To have put my money :** it was mine, not yours. **To the exchangers :** to the bankers. These were men who carried on a business midway between modern banking and modern pawn-broking. They took money on deposit and loaned it out on interest, paying interest themselves to the depositors. — *Abbott.* **Received mine own with usury :** *i. e.*, pay for the use of the money. It should be *interest*, not usury, as in Rev. Ver. Originally the words meant the same, but now usury means exorbitant or illegal interest.

THE TALENT AT INTEREST. Whatever machinery or organization the church possesses for utilizing opportunities which individual men fail to exercise, may be thought of as analogous to the banking-system of the old world. When men subscribe largely now to hospitals or missions, doing this and nothing more, they are "giving their money to the exchangers." It is not so acceptable an offering as willing and active service, but if it be honestly and humbly given by those whose wealth is their one talent, the giver will not lose his reward. — *Ellicott.*

THE PUNISHMENT OF NEGLECT. 28. **Take therefore the talent from him.** The punishment for refusing to use the talent is the loss of the talent itself. (1) The *opportunities* will be taken away from him who neglects them; he will not see them, nor be able to use them. (2) The *ability* to use them is taken away. The unused limb grows weak; the still water dries up and becomes foul; the inactive mind loses its power. This loss of the talent begins in this life; is gradual, that men may take warning and have opportunity to repent; but finally, at the judgment day, the talent will be wholly and irrevocably taken away. — *P.*

THIRD REWARD OF FAITHFULNESS. **And give it unto him which hath ten talents.** The faithful servant has not only those rewards which grow out of his faithfulness, but other and greater things are committed to his care, new capital to produce new results. The talent cannot remain unused, the opportunities cannot remain neglected because some are slothful. Those who are fitted to use them must have them. — *P.*

29. **For unto every one that hath :** in the sense that the men of two and five and ten talents had or possessed, by the hold which faithful use gives. That man *has* capital, not who merely holds it in his name or safe, but who knows its powers and capabilities, and how to make it accomplish its purposes. The man with the one talent buried it; he did not have it. — *P.* **Shall be given, and he shall have abundance.** This is illustrated in worldly and intellectual affairs every day. **From him that hath not :** has not made true use of, and therefore does not really possess. **Shall be taken away even that which he hath :**

30. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

be taken away. And cast ye 30 out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness : there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

or, as in Luke 8 : 18, "seemeth to have"; was given him to have, and which in some sense he did have.

30. Into outer darkness: outside of heaven, away from the presence of God, apart from the faithful who enter into the joy of their Lord (see Rev. Ver.). Note that the punishment is similar to the crime, absence of work being punished by absence of joy and light. **Weeping and gnashing of teeth.** See Lesson III., under ver. 51.

APPLICATIONS. 1. Men of slender abilities may often do more good in the world than men of much greater talents. It is rather a *warm heart* than a *strong head* which is required to do good. — *Barnes*. 2. Those of moderate means and powers are the great majority, and it is of utmost consequence that such feel their high responsibility, and that every one be brought into active and faithful service. This would give prosperity to the churches. — *Jacobus*. 3. It seems very certain that the world is to grow better and richer in the future, not by the magnificent achievements of the highly gifted few, but by the patient faithfulness of the one-talented many. — *Phillips Brooks*. 4. Those who are unwilling to obey God make a false accusation that he is a hard master. Those who obey him know his infinite love and joy.

"No man ere felt the halter draw
With good opinion of the law."

5. Cease to parade your feebleness. It is only a thin-veiled pride, not modesty at all. He who comes with all his faithful work, and offers it to the Lord, by whom alone he did it, his is the true humility. — *Phillips Brooks*. 6. God calls us to account, not for the *results* of our lives, but for the *purpose* and *faithfulness* in them. 7. Disloyal thoughts lead to disloyal actions. 8. Disloyal actions lead to disloyal thoughts. 9. Simple neglect will lead to ruin. 10. Sins of omission, as well as sins of commission, lead to the outer darkness. 11. Probation has a limit and an end. *Now* is the accepted time.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

In addition to the Commentaries, and works on the Parables, see Bushnell's *Sermons for the New Life*, "The Capacity of Religion extirpated by Disuse"; James Stirling's *Stewardship of Life*; Phillips Brooks' *Sermons*, "The Man with One Talent"; Bushnell's *Sermons on Living Subjects*, "How to be a Christian in Trade," ver. 16. *Sermons*, by Emmons, vol. 2 and vol. 6; by Spurgeon, vol. 4; by H. M. Dexter; by Summerfield.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

A brief review and introduction will quickly bring us to the

SUBJECT, — WORK AND WAGES IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

I. THE ENTRUSTED TALENTS (vers. 14, 15).

TEACH the Oriental customs on which this parable is founded.

DRAW OUT from the scholars the talents which God has entrusted to them.

SHOW them that God has given exceeding great treasures, even to him who has the least.

SHOW ALSO that each one has received that which he can use best; and that while there are great differences in the number and kind of talents entrusted to us, the greatest differences among men are found in their use of what God gives them.

II. THE FAITHFUL SERVANTS AND THEIR REWARD (vers. 16-23).

Illustrations. (1) The horizon widens as we climb. (2) The one careful use of any faculty increases its power, as the sailor's vision, the athlete's strength, the artist's skill and taste, the musician's power. "The only way to enlarge our sphere is to fill to overflowing the sphere we are in."

Illustration. Opportunities that come to us are unnoticed or unattainable, unless we have been faithfully growing into a power to use them. What is an opportunity to sing, or to be sea-captain, or to open a large business, to one who has acquired no fitness for those things. All the falling apples in the world would not have suggested to Newton the law of gravitation, nor would all the steaming tea-kettles in England have awakened in Watt the idea of the steam-engine, if they had not been prepared by previous faithful study and work.

NOTE the two kinds of reward for faithfulness.

III. THE UNPROFITABLE SERVANT AND HIS FATE (vers. 24-30).

NOTE how much the man of one talent might have done. A man with one pound, in the parable in Luke 19, gained ten pounds.

Illustrations. (1) The fish in Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, are entirely blind, from their long existence as a race in perfect darkness; although the fish of the same species in the streams outside in the light have good eyes. (2) Dr. Bushnell says, "If one of the arms be kept in free use, from childhood onward, while the other is drawn up over the head, and made rigid there, by long and violent detention, — a feat of religious austerity which the idolaters of the East often practise, — the free arm and shoulder will grow to full size, and the other will gradually shrink and perish."

Illustration. A man who might carve statues and paint pictures, spending his life in making mock flowers out of wax and paper, is wise compared with the man who might have God for company, and yet shuts God out and lives an empty life. — See *Phillips Brooks' Sermon on the Man with One Talent*.

LESSON VI. — MAY 6.

THE JUDGMENT. — MATT. 25 : 31-46.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.* — MATT. 25 : 46.

TIME. — Spoken Tuesday afternoon, April 4, A.D. 30. Immediately after the last lesson.

PLACE. — The Mount of Olives, where Jesus stopped with his disciples on his way from Jerusalem to Bethany.

INTRODUCTION.

Immediately after the parables studied in our last two lessons, and less than three days before his crucifixion, Jesus, for a moment, parted the veil which hangs between us and the future, and gave a glimpse of earth's closing scenes, and of the glory and triumph which should be his on the other side of the valley of humiliation.

This lesson is not a parable, but a picture and a prophecy. It does not liken the kingdom of God to anything, but describes "the literal Son of man, in his literal person, at his literal coming to a literal judgment," in that language and picture-form which can most vividly and truly express to us the great reality.

31. ¹When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory :

But when the Son of man ³¹ shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of

¹ Zech. 14 : 5. Matt. 16 : 27. Mark 8 : 38. Acts 1 : 11. ² Thess. 1 : 7. Rev. 1 : 7.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Judgment Scene. — Vers. 31-33. **THE JUDGE.** 31. **When the Son of man shall come.** In the final judgment of the world at what is called his second coming. **Come in his glory.** Not in a state of humiliation, as a man, poor, unknown, despised and rejected of men, crucified; but in his own true nature, divine, honored, and worshipped, the glorious King of kings and Lord of lords. **And all the holy angels with him.** Instead of a few humble followers, he will have a glorious retinue of the most noble and powerful and radiant beings in the universe, to be his attendants, to execute his will, to be his messengers with the speed of light. — *P.* Who can count their numbers? They are the bright stars that crowd in innumerable constellations every firmament that spans every globe and system throughout immensity. — *Schaff.* **Then shall he sit.** Expression of finished victory. **Upon the throne.** A king and judge, in contrast with his position as a prisoner before Pilate. The throne is the seat and source of sovereign power. **Throne of his glory.** More than "glorious throne"; the throne peculiar to, manifesting, his glory. What and where it will be, we do not know. — *Schaff.* The throne will be at once pre-eminently 'great,' and per-

32. And ¹before him shall be gathered all nations: and ²he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:

33. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34. Then shall the King say unto them on his right

his glory: and before him ³² shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: and he shall ³³ set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say ³⁴

¹ Rom. 14: 10. ² Cor. 5: 10. Rev. 20: 12. ² Ezek. 20: 38. Matt. 13: 49.

factly 'white,' or immaculate and pure (Rev. 20: 11). From it will issue the perfection of judgment, judgment that will not only be absolutely authoritative and irreversible and hence final, but that will also command the approbation and admiration of the moral universe at large. — *Morison*.

THE JUDGED. 32. **And before him shall be gathered.** Voluntarily, or involuntarily. **All nations:** of mankind. The phrase is equivalent to *the whole human race*. Not only those who shall be alive at his coming, but *all who have ever lived are embraced within the scope of the Saviour's conception*. — *Morison*. **And he shall separate them one from another.** Compare Ezek. 34: 17. Observe, the separation is not into a great variety of grades which merge into one another; it is into two well-defined classes. This description cannot be reconciled with the conception that the other world will be one simply of development, into which all men will enter at the stage of progress reached here, to pass by a process of education into the next higher class. There are but two classes, though there may be grades of character and condition in both. Observe, too, that there is a real separation between the righteous and the wicked on earth, but it is not made apparent till the judgment day. Then the gulf between them is fixed forever (Matt. 13: 49; Luke 16: 26). — *Abbott*. **As a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats:** literally from the kids, the young goats, which have not yet reached their maturity. No sinner in this world has reached his maturity in sin.

SHEEP AND GOATS. Though the two kinds of animals are often mixed together when out in the fields grazing, yet to the shepherd's eye they are never confounded; and when, for any purpose whatsoever, they require to be separated, the separation is effected unerringly. The two species of animals, though in some respects somewhat alike, are yet very different. When travelling between Joppa and Jerusalem, I saw, at a certain spot, a great intermingled flock of sheep and goats. The goats were all perfectly black, the sheep were all beautifully white; and thus, even to my eye, and while I was looking from a distance, the distinction between the two kinds was strikingly obvious. If a separation of the two had been required, there would not have been the least danger of a mistake. — *Morison*. The flocks of sheep and goats fed together in the same field. The goats were of a finer breed than I had before seen, and the sheep had long, coarse, hairy wool; so that, in casting your eye over the field, you could hardly say at the first glance, which were goats, and which were sheep. The shepherd at evening brought the flock home, and separated them into two parts, putting the sheep by themselves, and the goats by themselves. The words of the Saviour never came home to my mind with greater force than after witnessing this arrangement. — *Clarke's Glimpses of the Old World*.

Goats. Christ was himself also the shepherd of the goats, the shepherd of all mankind.

33. **And he shall set the sheep.** Who represent the righteous, because they are gentle, obedient, peaceful, ready to follow their guide, affectionate, — qualities, which when shown by men toward Christ, will lead to righteousness. **On his right hand:** the place of honor and favor. Some think there is a reference here to a custom in the Sanhedrim of putting the acquitted prisoners on the right of the president, and those who were convicted on his left. — *Freeman*. **But the goats.** The *goat* is especially a repulsive animal, and so a fit image for wicked men; and in Hebrew there is a single word which seems to designate the *goat* and a *demon*. — *Whedon*. The wicked are termed goats from their stubbornness (*Langé*); from their wantonness and stench (*Grotius*); because they are wild and intractable (*Schaff*); because they are comparatively worthless (*Meyer*), who thinks that the word for goats is in the original put in the diminutive, "little goats," "kids," for the purpose of expressing contempt. **On the left.** The place of rejection and condemnation. — *Jacobus*.

II. **The Judgment of the Righteous.** — Vers. 34-40. 34. **Then shall the King.** Jesus of Nazareth, exalted to his true place as king over all. **Say unto them on his right hand, Come.** Draw near to Christ outwardly as you have lived near to him in spirit; come nearer to him who is the centre and focus of joy and light and love. — *P*. Ye blessed

hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, ¹inherit the kingdom ²prepared for you from the foundation of the world :

35. ³For I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : ⁴I was a stranger, and ye took me in :

36. ⁵Naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me : ⁶I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison,

¹ Rom. 8: 17. ² 1 Pet. 1: 4; 3: 9. Rev. 21: 7. ³ Matt. 20: 23. Mark 10: 40. ⁴ 1 Cor. 2: 9. Heb. 11: 16. ⁵ Isa. 58: 7. Ezek. 18: 7. Jas. 1: 27. ⁶ Heb. 13: 2. 3 John 5. ⁷ Jas. 2: 15, 16. ⁸ 2 Tim. 1: 16.

of my father. Persons whom God has blessed, who are in a blessed state. It means exactly "My Father's blessed ones," denoting not simply that they have been blessed by him, but that they are his. — *Broadus*. The tense is perfect, meaning not to be blessed, but have been, and are blessed.

THE BLESSINGS from the Father were such as his loving care, the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, the experiences of the Gospel, the renewal of the heart, sanctification by the Spirit, the power to become children and heirs of God, the gifts and fruits of the Spirit, eternal life, the favor of God, the rest in the everlasting arms, the pavilion under the shadow of his wings. — *P*. **Inherit.** Receive not by purchase, or by labors, but by becoming children of God, and therefore heirs, — heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. **The kingdom.** The kingdom of heaven, in which saints reign over infinite forces and powers to make them minister to happiness and good: "All things are yours, because ye are Christ's." — *P*. **The kingdom of which Christ is King,** and which consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14: 17). — *Abbott*. **Prepared for you from the foundation of the world:** i.e., so prepared in the councils of divine love; not actually made ready (in full), for Christ went that he might prepare a place for us (John 14: 2). — *Abbott*. It is prepared for all God's children, for all who will trust in his Son and accept of his service and love. The whole history of man from Adam shows that God has been preparing a place for his people and a people for the place.

THE PREPARED KINGDOM. There is wonderful comfort and inspiration in the assurance that God regards us as worthy of his thought and planning from the very beginning; that it was not demons, nor chance, but the wise and loving God, who planned our lives, and he will carry them on to complete fruition.

THE EVIDENCE THAT THEY BELONGED AMONG THE BLESSED. 35. **For I:** Jesus, the King, the judge himself. **Was a hungered:** in the person of his representatives, his poor children and friends on earth. **I was a stranger:** an unknown, a foreigner, who had no apparent claim except being homeless and friendless. In the East such an one was dependent upon private hospitality. **And ye took me in:** to your hearts and homes.

36. **Naked:** without sufficient clothing, suffering for lack of raiment. **And ye clothed me** (Acts 9: 36-39). **I was sick and ye visited me:** more literally, *looked after me*. For illustration, see Luke 7: 2, 3; 10: 30-37. **In prison and ye came unto me.** (Jer. 38: 7-13; 2 Tim. 1: 16, 17). — *Abbott*. Healing and release are not mentioned: these could be rendered by a few only; but visitation, sympathy, care, which all can give. — *Schaff*. To go to the wretched outcasts in prison was perhaps an unheard-of act of charity in those days: it was to enter places horrible and foul beyond description; Sallust, speaking of the Tullianum (the state prison at Rome), says "incultu, tenebris, adore fœda atque terribilis ejus facies est." — *Professor Carr*.

SUGGESTIONS. I. There is a climax in this enumeration. The first three are recognized duties; the last three are voluntary acts of self-forgetting love. — *Professor Carr*.

II. These acts are such as are possible to all Christians, and express a true Christian spirit. They are not such as require merely an outlay of money, but such as involve also the sacrifice of time, strength, rest, comfort, etc. — *Heubner*. To clothe the naked implies a liberal and loving spirit; to visit the sick is an act of spontaneous self-sacrifice. — *Carr*.

III. The few acts of kindness here named are but specimens of all those good deeds which presuppose their faith in Christ, which purifies the heart and works by love. Hence called *pure religion* (Jas. 1: 27), for, void of this faith and love, whatever we do profiteth us nothing (1 Cor. 13: 3; Heb. 4: 2; 12: 14). — *Binney*.

IV. No reference is made to spiritual help. The case is one in which the less includes the greater, as the promise of reward to one who gives a cup of cold water includes a promise

37. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

38. When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*?

39. Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40. And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, ¹Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto

¹ Prov. 14: 31; 19: 17. Mark 9: 41. Heb. 6: 10.

for all larger service. Even the lowest forms of philanthropy, if they are the offspring of true love, have their reward. — *Abbott*. Much more are those ministering to Christ, who carry the bread of life to the heathen, and bring freedom to those bound in the prison-house of sin, and who are sick with absence from hope and God.

V. He that does these things has the spirit and follows the example of Christ, for we were hungry and he gives us to eat (John 6: 32-35), thirsty and he gives us drink (John 4: 14; 6: 55, 56), strangers from the promise and he receives us to himself (Eph. 2: 18, 19), naked and he clothes us (Rom. 13: 14; 2 Cor. 5: 3; Gal. 3: 27; Rev. 3: 18), sick and he visits us with redeeming love (Ps. 147: 3; Jer. 3: 22; Hos. 14: 4; Luke 1: 68, 78; Heb. 2: 6), in prison and he comes to us, shares our prison fare, and so ransoms and delivers us (Rom. 8: 2, 3; Heb. 2: 9, 10). — *Abbott*.

37-39. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee? etc. (1) This is the language of modesty and humility indeed, but it is also much more; for (2) they were actually unconscious of the number and degree of their good deeds. They had passed out of their memory as every-day occurrences. (3) While they had done these things from a spirit of love to Christ, they had not thought of doing them to a great king, who could reward them, but only to those who needed their care and love. — *P.* (4) Did our Lord then teach or imply a doctrine of salvation by works, or of merit? The very statement contradicts that supposition; for they who do such works have no thought of merit in them. They are astonished and overwhelmed at the numeration, "Lord, when saw we thee?" What they did was not in the endeavor to merit heaven, but was the acting out of a true love to Christ in dependence upon him. — *J. P. Thompson*. It is not the *works*, as such, but the *love* which prompted them, that love which *was their faith* — which felt its way, though in darkness, to him who is love — which is commended. — *Alford*. The essence of the passage is that the actions in question will be accepted as indicating *personal relations to Christ*; and it is really personal relation to Christ, acted out in the life, that will fix eternal destiny. — *Broadus*.

THE UNCONSCIOUS GOODNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS. (I.) The unconsciousness of the righteous shows that their virtues were sincere and true; that they had not done these good deeds for the sake of the honor or the reward, or as legalists seeking to purchase heaven. Whosoever does good deeds *for the sake of* the reward, *deserves* no reward, and will obtain none, for the soul of goodness is left out of such deeds.

(II.) Unconscious goodness is the highest form of goodness. The beginner in music counts his measures, and studies on what note he shall place each finger; but the perfect musician strikes the right notes and expresses the right emotions almost as naturally as he breathes or as the birds warble their morning songs. "There is an ease," says Dr. Parker, "which is the last passion in a very severe process. We know what this is in reading, writing, learning, business, poetry, eloquence, — everywhere there is a facility which seems as if it cost the doer or the speaker nothing, whereas it expresses the last point of a long and complete culture." Such is the goodness of the angels, such the highest goodness of the saints, so habitual, so naturally flowing from their holy nature, that its acts are done without impressing the memory. It is not the man of health, but the sick man that counts his pulse, and remembers each breath he draws. — *P.*

40. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, etc.: the obscurest, the poorest, the most despised of his disciples, and those with the least of his spirit and character. Moreover, "the least of these my brethren" is not limited to Christians,

41. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, ¹Depart from me, ye cursed, ²into everlasting fire, prepared for ³the devil and his angels:

42. For I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45. Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say

me. Then shall he say also ⁴¹unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, ⁴²and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, ⁴³and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also ⁴⁴answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then ⁴⁵shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inas-

¹ Ps. 6: 8. Luke 13: 27.

² Matt. 13: 40, 42.

³ 2 Pet. 2: 4. Jude 6.

but includes all whom we may help for his sake, as he has taught us in the parable of the good Samaritan.

NOTE (1) that "the least" are mentioned here, because inferior motives would be less likely to have influence in prompting us to aid such persons.

NOTE (2) that the essential element which is rewarded is the love of Christ and devotion to him.

NOTE (3) what a splendid opportunity opens here for us to do that to which our hearts often prompt us, some act of personal devotion and love to Jesus. We would express our gratitude to him personally.

NOTE (4) this direct and personal service of Jesus tends to transfigure all our daily lives with the radiance of heaven. — *P.*

III. **The Judgment of the Wicked.** — Vers. 41-46. 41. **Depart from me, ye cursed.** Those who are far from God in character are punished by being made to live far from his home, his heaven, his joy, his intimate friendship. Nor is this a mere arbitrary punishment; for there is a natural repulsion and antagonism between the good and the evil. The wicked not only *shall not*, but *cannot*, see God. — *P.* **Ye cursed:** ye who are under the curse, "devoted to death." It is very important to observe the distinction between the blessing (ver. 34) and the curse here. "Blessed of my Father," but not cursed of my Father, because all man's salvation *is of God*, all his condemnation from himself. — *Alford.* It was their own free choice of sin which made them accursed. **Into everlasting fire:** fire that cannot be quenched or escaped. "The word *everlasting* has in it no *wicket* gate that we can see." The fire may not be literal, for we cannot conceive of literal fire consuming a spirit, or a spiritual body, even; but the words mean some punishment as terrible to the soul as literal fire is to the body. **Prepared for the devil and his angels:** who were the first beings to sin, and therefore the ones for whom a place and punishment were prepared. — *P.* The kingdom was prepared *for you*, but the fire has been prepared *for the devil and his angels, not for you*: because there is election to life, but there is no reprobation to death; a book of life, but no book of death; but they who will serve the devil must share with him in the end. — *Alford.* And men who share it, share it because they have prepared themselves for it. — *Prof. Riddle.*

42, 43. **For I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat**, etc. Only sins of *omission* are mentioned here; showing that the absence of good works, the destitution of love, or the dominion of selfishness, disqualifies man for blessedness, and is sufficient, even without positive crimes, to exclude him from heaven. — *Schaff.*

SINS OF OMISSION. (1) There are two ways of measuring sin, — *down* and *up*: *down*, by counting all the actual sins we have done, — all covetings, anger, evil thoughts, selfishness, falsehoods, dishonesties; *up*, by seeing what we might have been, all the goods deeds we might have done, the character we might have formed, the blessed, useful life we might have lived, and God intended us to live, and then placing beside this picture the life we have actually lived: this will show the number of our sins of omission. But probably we have omitted more of *quality* from our life than mere *quantity*. It is not more the definite acts that we have left out, than the perfectness, the beauty, the spirituality, from the deeds we have done. (2) The sins of omission prove that we have not true faith and love toward Jesus. A good being could not omit these things mentioned here from their lives. (3) From sins of

unto you, ¹Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

46. And ²these shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal.

much as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall ⁴⁶go away into eternal punishment : but the righteous into eternal life.

¹ Prov. 14 : 31 ; 17 : 5. Zech. 2 : 8. Acts 9 : 5. ² Dan. 12 : 2. John 5 : 29. Rom. 2 : 7.

omission complete recovery seems impossible. No future good works will do the deeds left undone. (4) The poorest hope of heaven is that which is based on the words, "I have done no harm." The very stones, insects, reptiles, may say as much as that. (5) The punishment is like the sin; it omits heaven and joy and God and the companionship of the good from our lives, and adds the everlasting fire. — *P.*

44, 45. Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, etc. They were unconscious that their inhumanity was also impiety. They would have shown honor to the King if they had recognized him; but he measures their character by their treatment of his subjects. — *Abbott.* Sin is as unconscious of its enormity as goodness is of its extent. Both are chiefly but seeds in this world; and but few here realize what great trees, what numberless fruits, what strange development is to grow from them. This unconsciousness of their guilt shows its greatness. They were so bad that they did not even see the true standard of living. — *P.*

46. These . . . into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal: or better, "life everlasting"; for the same word is used for both in the original. The punishment is without end and without remedy. Some have taught that "eternal," in both cases, refers to the *quality* of the existence, not to its duration; but it is the duration which shows the quality, and distinguishes this punishment from those temporary ones through which there is hope of reform. — It seems strange that such words as these should come from the most loving Being in the universe, and just as he was to show the infinitude of his love upon Calvary. But it is from the heights of love that the greatest depth of the guilt and the danger of sin can be seen, and whence should come the most earnest warnings against sin. — *P.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

An excellent illustration of ver. 40 is Leigh Hunt's poem, "Abou Ben Adhem." Of vers. 42-45 is Hood's *Poems*, "The Lady's Dream." On the judgment, see Sears' *Foregleams*, p. 101; Warren's *Parousia*; Greene's *Glimpses of the Coming*, p. 115; Whately's *Future State*, p. 161. On ver. 46, see Bartlett against Universalism; Dexter on *The Reasonableness of Future Punishment*; J. G. Hargreaves' *The Blunders of Vice and Folly*; Haley's *The Hereafter of Sin. Sermons*, by Nettleton, Edwards, Alexander, Emmons, J. P. Thompson; Lowell's *Poems*, "The Present Crisis"; the hymn *Dies Iræ*.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. A day of judgment is certainly coming for all.
2. Ver. 32. There will be a separation into two classes, each going to his own place.
3. This separation will not be arbitrary, but according to character and fitness.
4. Ver. 34. Heaven has been long prepared for the good.
5. Vers. 35, 36. Character and faith are measured by the works they produce.
6. We serve God by helping man.
7. It is a great privilege to show our love to our Saviour, by showing it to his poor.
8. Vers. 37-39. The highest virtue is unconscious of its own greatness. "The man that is not greater than he knows is a very small affair."
9. Ver. 41. Those who do the deeds of Satan must go to the place prepared for Satan.
10. Vers. 42, 43. The wicked are condemned not only for the evil they did, but for the good they omitted to do.
11. The wicked usually imagine themselves better than they are.
12. Ver. 44. The heart is tested by what we do to Christ in his humiliation, not by what we would do for him in his glory.
13. Our future life is determined by what we do on earth.
14. The separation is final and eternal.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

A brief review, connecting the last lesson with this.

SUBJECT, — THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

I. THE JUDGMENT SCENE (vers. 31-33).

Illustration of separating the flocks. The morning after reaching Palestine, when setting out from Ramleh, across the plain of Sharon, we saw a shepherd leading forth a flock of white sheep and black goats, all mingled as they followed him. Presently he turned aside into a little green valley, and stood facing the flock. When a sheep came up, he tapped it with his long staff on the right side of the head, and it quickly moved off to his right; a goat he tapped on the other side, and it went to his left. Thus the Saviour's image presented itself exactly before our eyes. — *Prof. F. A. Broadus.*

SCRIPTURE HELPS. Acts 17: 31; Rom. 2: 5; 14: 10, 12; 2 Cor. 5: 10; 2 Tim. 4: 1; Jude 15; Luke 17: 24; Eccl. 11: 9; Rev. 20: 4-15; 2 Pet. 3: 7-12.

II. THE RIGHTEOUS REWARDED (ver. 34).

Illustration. *Prepared from the Foundation of the World.* Even this world has been preparing from the beginning to be the abode of righteous men. The coal and the oil were laid up ages ago; the powers of steam, of electricity, all the forces used by men were made in the beginning.

III. BECAUSE THEIR DEEDS WERE RIGHTEOUS (vers. 35-40).

Illustration. *Doing for Christ in the Persons of his Poor.* Macaulay, in his essay on Milton (p. 43) says, "Ariosto tells a story of a fairy, who, by some mysterious law of her nature, was condemned to appear at certain seasons in the form of a foul, poisonous snake. Those who injured her during the period of her disguise were forever excluded from participation in the blessings which she bestowed. But to those who, in spite of her loathsome aspect, pitied and protected her, she afterward revealed herself in the beautiful and celestial form which was natural to her, accompanied their steps, granted all their wishes, filled their houses with wealth, made them happy in love and victorious in war." So what is done to Christ in his disguised and lowly form, of the poor and sick of earth, is a test of our character and of our love, and will be rewarded and blessed by him when he comes in his glory. — *P.*

Illustration. Leigh Hunt's poem *About ben Adhem*, who, when the angel appeared to him with his book, in which were written "the names of those who love the Lord," asked that his own name might be written as "one who loves his fellow-men." The angel appeared again, —

"And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

Illustration. *Unconsciousness of Virtue* (vers. 37-39). True virtue never publishes itself; it does not even know itself. Its transpirations are so free and smooth and deep as to escape the ear of consciousness. Hence people are generally aware of their virtue in proportion as they have it *not*. We are apt to estimate the merit of our good deeds according to the struggle we make in doing them; whereas, the greater our virtue, the less we shall have to struggle in order to do them, and it is purely the weakness and imperfection of our virtue that makes it so hard to do well. Accordingly we find that he who does no duty without being goaded up to it is conscious of much more virtue than he has; while he who does every duty as a thing of course and a matter of delight, is *unconscious of his virtue, simply because he has so much of it.* — *Hudson's Lectures on Shakespeare*, vol. ii. p. 103.

IV. THE WICKED PUNISHED (ver. 41).

V. BECAUSE THEIR DEEDS WERE EVIL (vers. 42-46).

Illustration. *Sins of Omission.* Two pictures, — one of what we might have been and might have done, the other of what we have been and done, — and the contrast.

Illustration. Hood's *The Lady's Dream*, where she saw the funeral procession of one who had died through her neglect; and the sick, the starving, whom she might have helped; — their sad eyes burned her very soul.

"And yet it was never in my soul
To play so ill a part;
But evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as by want of heart."

LESSON VII. — MAY 13.

THE LORD'S SUPPER. — MATT. 26: 17-30.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.* — I COR. 5: 7.

TIME. — Thursday evening, April 6, A.D. 30. Two days after the last lesson. It was the evening after the 14th of Nisan (the day of preparation, and hence called the first day of the feast), and therefore was the beginning of the 15th of Nisan, which, according to the Jewish reckoning, commenced immediately after the sunset of the 14th, and which was the day on which the Passover was eaten.

There is some little discussion among scholars whether this was the regular Passover which Jesus ate, and whether this celebration of the Passover by Jesus was not on Wednesday eve, and the crucifixion on Thursday instead of Friday. But the Sunday-school teacher has no time to enter upon these discussions. If any wish for further light on these questions, see *Library References* below.

PLACE. — An upper room in Jerusalem.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Mark 14: 12-26; Luke 22: 7-30; I Cor. 11: 23-25. Compare John 13: 1-30; and read John, chaps. 13 to 17.

INTERVENING EVENTS. — Jesus, when he had finished his discourse, continued his walk to Bethany, where he spent Tuesday night, and all day Wednesday, and Thursday morning, in retirement, probably with his friends Mary and Martha and Lazarus. During this time the rulers conspire against him (Matt. 26: 1-5), and Judas agrees to betray his Master for 30 pieces of silver (26: 14-16). The anointing at Bethany (26: 6-13) probably took place on the previous Saturday (John 12: 2-8).

HARMONY OF EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE LORD'S SUPPER.

		MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
1	Preparations for the supper	26: 17-19	14: 12-16	22: 7-13	...
2	Christ goes to Jerusalem	" 20	" 17	" 14	...
3	Strife among the disciples for the first place	" . . .	" . . .	" 24	...
4	Christ rebukes them by washing their feet	" . . .	" . . .	" 24-30	13: 1-20
5	All take their places at the Passover supper	" 20	" . . .	" 14-18	...
6	Announcement of the traitor	" 21-25	" 18-21	" 21-23	" 21-30
7	Judas' departure	" . . .	" . . .	" . . .	" 31-32
8	Institution of the Lord's Supper	" 26-29	" 22-25	" 19-20	...
9	The warning to Peter	" 30-35	" 26-31	" 31-38	" 33-38
10	Christ promises the Comforter	" . . .	" . . .	" . . .	14: 1-31
11	They rise from the table	" . . .	" . . .	" . . .	" 31
12	While standing around him in the room, Christ utters his last discourse	" . . .	" . . .	" . . .	15: 1-16, 33
13	Closing with a prayer	" . . .	" . . .	" . . .	17: 1-26
14	After singing a hymn, they go out to the Mount of Olives	" 30, 36	" 26, 32	" 39	18: 1

17. Now ¹the first *day* of the *feast* of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

Now on the first *day* of un-¹⁷leavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the passover?

¹ Ex. 12: 6, 18. Mark 14: 12. Luke 22: 7.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Preparing for the Passover Feast. — Vers. 17-19. 17. Now the first day of the feast: that is, on Thursday, the 14th of Nisan, or Abib. Legally the first day of unleavened bread was the 15th day, commencing on the evening of the 14th; but, practically, even by Josephus, the 14th was called the first day of the feast, because on that day before noon all leavened bread was removed from their houses, even to the minutest crumb, and the lamb for the Passover was slain, though not eaten. Thus this day was really the beginning of the Passover season. The feast of unleavened bread: the Passover, so called, because leavened bread was rigidly excluded during the whole seven days of the feast.

18. And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

19. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

20. Now¹ when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when even was come, he was sitting at meat with the twelve disci-

¹ Mark 14: 17-21. Luke 22: 14. John 13: 21.

SYMBOLISM OF THE UNLEAVENED BREAD. This specially symbolized three things: (1) The haste with which they fled from Egypt, not having time to wait for bread to rise (Ex. 12: 34, 39). (2) Their sufferings in Egypt, hence called the bread of affliction (Deut. 16: 3), and hence all the afflictions of the bondage of sin. But (3) chiefly their purity as a consecrated nation, since fermentation is incipient putrefaction, and leaven was thus a symbol of impurity. — *F. H. Newhall.* **Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?** A chamber was required; and the materials of a simple but satisfying repast or feast, — bread, herbs, and wine, — were required. The paschal lamb itself, the staple of the feast, the *pièce de résistance*, had to be purchased, and then it had to be slain in the temple “between the evenings,” that is, between the ninth and eleventh hours of the day (Josephus, *War.* vi. 9: 3), or between three and five o’clock in the afternoon. After being slain in the sacred place (Deut. 16: 5, 6), it had to be taken to a private dwelling to be cooked, that it might be ready for the sacred festivity, which would commence with the commencement of the fifteenth day. — *Morison.* **18. And he said, Go into the city:** from Bethany where they now were, into Jerusalem, where only the paschal supper could be eaten. — *G. W. Clark.* **To such a man.** The Greek word is that used when the writer knows, but does not care to mention, the name of the man referred to. St. Mark and St. Luke relate the sign that was given them. They were to meet a man “bearing a pitcher of water,” and follow him, and were to see in the house into which he entered that in which they were to make their preparations. The master of the house was probably a disciple, but secretly, like many others, “for fear of the Jews” (John 12: 42). — *Ellicott.* The man’s name was not mentioned probably, in order that Judas might not know in advance, and betray Jesus before his time came. **I will keep (or I keep) the passover at thy house.** A company of not less than ten, and from that up to twenty, were required to keep the Passover together, as it would require so many to consume the whole lamb. During the Passover week, hospitality was recognized as a universal duty in Jerusalem: pilgrims and strangers were received, and rooms were allotted to them for the celebration of the feast. But it is not probable that a room would have been given to entire strangers without previous arrangement. Whether Christ had previously arranged with him for the use of a room, or whether the instruction to Peter and John was founded wholly on supernatural knowledge of the welcome which would be accorded to him, we have no means of knowing. — *Abbott.*

19. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them. They did it through Peter and John (Luke), who seem to have acted as a committee for the whole. **And they made ready the passover:** in a large upper room (Mark) furnished with tables and couches, and swept and clean. Even at the present day, the very humblest Jewish family generally has at the Passover time, the walls of the house white-washed, the floor scrubbed, the furniture cleaned, and all things made to put on a new appearance. — *Mills’ British Jews.*

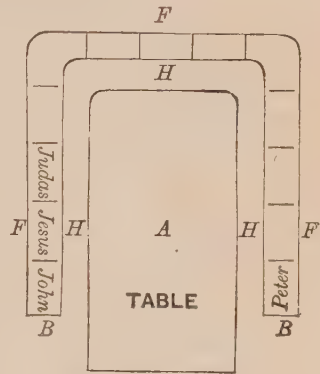
II. The Celebration of the Passover. — Ver. 20. **Now when even was come.** It was probably while the sun was beginning to decline in the horizon that Jesus and the disciples descended once more over the Mount of Olives into the Holy City. Before them lay Jerusalem in her festive attire. White tents dotted the sward, gay with the bright flowers of early spring, or peered out from the gardens and the darker foliage of the olive plantations. From the gorgeous temple buildings, dazzling in their snow-white marble and gold, on which the slanting rays of the sun were reflected, rose the smoke of the altar of burnt-offering. The streets must have been thronged with strangers, and the flat roofs covered with eager gazers. — *Edersheim’s The Temple and its Services.* **He sat down (or rather reclined) with the twelve.**

UNEXPECTED EVENTS. Even in this most solemn hour, as they began to take their places, there arose a strife among the disciples as to who should be the greatest (Luke 22: 24-30), probably with reference to the places of honor at the table.

In consequence of this, at the time for the washing of hands, Jesus arose from the table, and washed his disciples' feet, teaching them a lesson of humility and loving service for others, instead of exaltation over them (John 13: 4-11).

THE SUPPER SCENE. Around a low, Eastern table, oval or rather elongated, two parts covered with a cloth, the single divans or pillows are ranged in the form of an elongated horseshoe, leaving free one end of the table, somewhat as in the accompanying cut. Here *A* represents the table; *BB* respectively the ends of the two rows of single divans on which each guest reclines, lying on his left side, and leaning on the left hand, with his head (*H*) nearest the table, and his feet (*F*) stretching back towards the ground. Each guest occupies a separate divan or pillow. (Thus we see how Jesus could wash their feet.) As to the arrangements of the guests, the chief personage would sit near one end of the table. If there were three persons, he would sit between the two. We know from the Gospel narrative that John occupied the place on Jesus' right, at that end of the divans, as we may call it, at the head of the table. But the chief place next to the Master would be that to his left, or above him. In the strife of the disciples, which should be accounted the greatest, this had been claimed, and we believe it to have been actually occupied, by Judas. This explains how, when Christ whispered to John

by what sign to recognize the traitor, none of the others heard it. It also explains how Christ would first hand to Judas the sop, which formed part of the paschal ritual, beginning with him as the chief guest of the table, without thereby exciting special notice. Lastly, it accounts for the circumstance that, when Judas, desirous of ascertaining whether his treachery was known, dared to ask whether it was he, and received the affirmative answer, no one at table knew what had passed. As regards Peter, we can quite understand how, when the Lord with such loving words rebuked their self-seeking, and taught them of the greatness of Christian humility, he should, in his impetuosity of shame, have rushed to take the lowest place at the other end of the table. Finally, we can now understand how Peter could beckon to John, who sat at the opposite end of the table, over against him, and ask him across the table who the traitor was. — *Edersheim*.



PLAN OF SUPPER TABLE.



AN ORIENTAL SUPPER SCENE.

MODE OF CELEBRATING THE SUPPER. The rites of the feast were regulated by the succession of the cups, filled with red wine, commonly mixed with water. (1) *Announcement of the feast.* The head of the house pronounced the thanksgiving or benediction over the wine and the feast. The first cup was then drunk; then the washing of hands after praise. (2) *The eating of the bitter herbs*, dipped in vinegar or salt water, in remembrance of the

21. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

23. And he answered and said, ¹He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24. The Son of man goeth ²as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is

ples: and as they were eating, ²¹ he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceed-²² ing sorrowful, and began to say unto him every one, Is it I, Lord? And he answered ²³ said, He that dipped his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of ²⁴ man goeth, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son

¹ Ps. 41:9. Luke 22:21. John 15:18. ² Ps. 22. Isa. 53. Dan. 9:26. 1 Cor. 15:3. ³ John 17:12.

sorrows in Egypt. Meanwhile the paschal dishes were brought in,—the well-seasoned broth, the unleavened loaves, the festal offerings, and the lamb. All these things were then explained. They sang the first part of the Hallel, or song of praise (Ps. 113, 114), and the second cup was drunk. (3) Then began the *feast proper* (at which they reclined, because only slaves stood, and they were now freemen): the householder took two loaves, broke one in two, laid it upon the whole loaf, blessed it, wrapped it with bitter herbs, dipped it, ate of it, and handed it round with the words, "This is the bread of affliction, which our fathers eat in Egypt." He then blessed the paschal lamb, and ate of it; the festal offerings were eaten with the bread, dipped in the broth, and finally the lamb. The thanksgiving for the meal followed the blessing and drinking of the third cup. With this cup our Lord connected his own supper. — *Edersheim*.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PASSOVER. (1) It was the anniversary of the birth of the Jewish nation. (2) It marked the divine favor and protection in preserving their first-born from destruction. The destroying angel *passed over* the houses on which the blood was sprinkled, or, as some take it, the Jehovah angel *passed over* and stood over the door, and shut out the destroying angel. (3) It commemorated their salvation from the bondage of Egypt, and their separation to a holy life. (4) The sacrifice acknowledged their sin and need of atonement, (5) which they must apply to themselves by faith. (6) The absence of leaven denoted their putting away sin. (7) The bitter herbs were a token of their repentance. (8) The whole foreshadowed the coming of their Redeemer. — *P.*

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER. (1) Christ was the Lamb of God, without blemish; a sacrifice for our sin. (2) He was offered in the same city and at the same hour as the sacrificial lamb. (3) Not a bone was broken. (4) The blood must be applied to be effectual. (5) All the leaven of sin must be removed. (6) The eating must be accompanied with the bitter herbs of repentance. (7) It makes a new era in the soul.

III. The Announcement of his Betrayal. — Vers. 21-25. 21. And as they did eat, he said, . . . one of you shall betray me. John says he was "troubled in spirit." The Saviour's heart was touched with the ingratitude of one for whom he had done so much. Judas had already agreed to betray him for 30 pieces of silver; but this announcement gave Judas opportunity to repent, and led the other disciples to thorough heart-searchings. Moreover, it would show the disciples, after the event, that it was no surprise to Jesus, but part of the divine plan.

22. And they were exceeding sorrowful: that he should be betrayed; but most of all that one of their own number should fall so low, and at the bare possibility that they might fall into such an abyss of sin. Lord, is it I? The interrogative particle employed (*μήτι*) is of such a nature that a negative answer is confidently anticipated. *Surely it is not I, is it?*

NOTE they did not accuse one another, but each one searched his own heart.

23. And he answered and said, he that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, etc. This did not designate the traitor, but repeats his declaration in another form. Even one of you now eating with me shall betray me (John 13:18). Here was double-dyed treachery, not only against his master, but against the strictest law of Eastern hospitality. In order to understand this occurrence, we must remember that at an Oriental feast there were no knives and forks and plates, but each guest ate with his fingers from a common dish. In the centre of the table was a large dish, containing a sauce composed of vinegar, dates, figs, and spice, into which each guest dipped his herbs, bread, and meat, as they were eaten.

24. The Son of man goeth (to his death) as it is written: in such passages as Ps. 22 and Isa. 53. He must die, if he would save the world. His death was not the result of accident, nor controlled by demons, but "he was delivered up to die by the determinate

betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

26. And ¹as they were eating, Jesus ²took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this ³is my body.

27. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for ⁴many for the remission of sins.

of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born. And Judas, which ²⁵betrayed him, answered and said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith unto him, Thou hast said. And as they were eating, Jesus ²⁶took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took ²⁷a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my ²⁸blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remis-

¹ Mark 14: 22. Luke 22: 19.

² 1 Cor. 11: 23-25.

³ 1 Cor. 10: 16.

⁴ Rom. 5: 15. Heb. 9: 22.

counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2: 23). But woe unto that man. Not a threatening, not an utterance of passion, but a sad statement of a terrible fact.

NOTE how Jesus, instead of exposing Judas, gives him another opportunity to repent. He sets out the consequences of his sin in such a vivid light as to lead if possible even his hard heart to contrition, and turn him from his dreadful course.—*P.* It had been good for that man if he had not been born. Observe the incidental confirmation of the doctrine elsewhere taught, that for the finally lost soul there is no redemption. It could not with truth be said of one, it had been good for that man if he had not been born, if the temporary punishment of his sin was to be followed by his final redemption, and his glorious realization, at last, of the image of God.—*Abbott.* Here probably occurred the private conversation between Peter, John, and Jesus, recorded in John 13: 23-26.

25. Then Judas . . . said, Master, is it I? Judas probably said this to ward off suspicion from himself, for it would not do for him alone to be silent. Thou hast said. This is a formula of assent both in Hebrew and Greek, and is still used in Palestine in that sense. These words seem also to have been spoken in a low voice inaudible to the rest.—*Professor Carr.* This could easily be if the disciples were arranged as Edersheim suggests above. John's account (13: 28, 29) implies that the others did not know. Here also occurs John 13: 29-35.

IV. The Institution of the Lord's Supper.—Vers. 26-30. 26. And as they were eating. Sometime during the feast. Jesus took bread. Took the loaf or thin cake of unleavened bread, which was before him.—*Clark.* One loaf points to the one body of Christ broken for many. The bread points to Jesus as the food of the soul. Blessed it. As was the wise and pious custom. And brake. Signifying Christ's body broken for us. Take, eat; this is my body. Luke adds, "which is given for you" (22: 19); Paul, "which is broken for you" (1 Cor. 11: 24); and both add, "This do in remembrance of me." Signifying not only that Jesus is himself the spiritual bread to them, but also that they in receiving and eating it accept of him and his atonement by faith.—*G. W. Clark.* This (in the neuter, not "this bread," in the masculine) is my body, represents, expresses my body. We interpret it as we do his other sayings: The seed is the word, the harvest is the end of the world, I am the door, I am the vine.—*Bishop Browne.* He said almost the same words a year before he died (John 6: 48-58).

27. And he took the cup: containing the wine. But nowhere in the accounts of the Lord's Supper is the word *wine* used, but "cup," "fruit of the vine," so that fresh, unfermented grape juice fulfils all the conditions of this observance, and is even a more perfect symbol than fermented wine. And gave thanks. From the Greek word thus translated comes *The Eucharist*, i.e., "The Thanksgiving," as a phrase for taking the bread and wine.

28. For this is my blood. A type or emblem of his blood, his life (Lev. 17: 14), which he laid down as the atonement for sin. Of the new testament: or covenant. The word *new* is omitted in the most ancient Mss. Covenant is the preferable sense here. It need hardly be remarked that the title of the New Testament is derived from this passage.—*Cambridge Bible.* The new covenant was, that God would renew and save all who believed in Jesus. It is the new promise to men, the new Gospel dispensation, in which God has used his perfect wisdom in seeking to save the world from sin. Which is shed for many. Multitudes, not merely a few, are to be saved by Christ. This blood of the new testament

29. But ¹I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30. And ²when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

sion of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

And when they had sung a 30 hymn, they went out unto the mount of Olives.

¹ Mark 14: 25. Luke 22: 18.

² Mark 14: 26.

was for every soul that comes to him, be they never so many; like the widow's oil, in the Book of the Kings, there is enough, and enough again, as long as any vessel is brought to receive it. — *Lightfoot*. For the remission of sins. In order that there may be remission or forgiveness and removal of sins. It was by the atonement made on the cross that God was enabled to be just, and yet the justifier of every one who believes on Jesus. The "cup" ever points to this great central culminating fact in the Gospel.

29. **I will not drink henceforth**, etc. He is done with earthly rites. They can no more meet with him around a Passover table in the social intercourse of friendship. **Drink it new**: not new wine, but anew, "a new kind of wine, at a new kind of supper." **In my Father's kingdom**: in the kingdom of God completed, perfected. It points to the victory of the church, not to its conflicts; and the continued celebration of the Lord's Supper is an expression of assured victory on the part of his militant church. — *Schaff*. After the institution of the Lord's Supper, there occurred that wonderfully touching interview with the eleven disciples recorded by John (13: 31 to 17: 26). It is well to read it at this point. The importance attached to the closing events is shown by the fact that the evangelists devote one-sixth of all their narratives to the account of these twenty-four hours. — *Abbott*.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER. It is a reminder of the leading truths of the Gospel. (1) Salvation, like this bread, is the gift of God's love. (2) We are reminded of the life of Christ, — all he was and did and said. (3) We are reminded, as by the Passover, of the grievous bondage of sin from which Christ redeems us. (4) It holds up the atonement, the body of Christ broken, his blood shed, for us. (5) In Christ alone is forgiveness and salvation from sin, the first need of the soul. (6) Christ is the food of the soul. (7) We must partake by faith, or it will be of no avail. (8) We are taught to distribute to one another the spiritual blessings God gives us. (9) By this meal our daily bread is sanctified. (10) The most intimate communion with God in Christ. (11) Communion with one another. (12) It is a feast of joy. "Nothing less than the actual joy of heaven is above it." (13) It is a prophecy of Christ's second coming, of the perfect triumph of his kingdom. (14) It is holding up before the world the cross of Christ; not a selfish gathering of a few saints, but a proclamation of the Saviour for all. — *P*.

30. And when they had sung a hymn: after the prayer recorded in John 17. It was customary to commence the Passover service with singing or chanting Psalms 113 and 114, and to conclude the services with the 115th to the 118th from the Scripture, in which not only the events of the exodus are commemorated, but there is a direct reference to the sorrows of the Messiah, and his resurrection from the dead. — *Jacobus*. **They went out into the mount of Olives**. Luke adds, "as he was wont"; i.e., during this passion week (compare John 8: 1). This may have been for solitude simply, or also in part for safety. He went directly to the Garden of Gethsemane. — *Abbott*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Phillips Brooks' *Sermons*, I. p. 277, "Lord, is it I?" Edersheim's *Temple and its Services*, pp. 177-231; Walker's *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*; W. J. E. Bennett's *The Eucharist, its History, Doctrine, and Practice*; E. Bickersteth's *Treatise on the Lord's Supper*; J. Chaplin's *The Memorial Hour*; G. F. McClear's *The Witness of the Eucharist*. For a discussion as to whether this was the regular Passover, and was held on Wednesday or Thursday eve, see Wescott's *Introduction to the Gospels*, p. 316; Andrews' *Life of Christ*, pp. 367-397; Smith's *New Testament History*, p. 288; Aldrich's *The Day of our Lord's Crucifixion*; and Lane's *Confirmations of Passion Week*.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Vers. 17, 18. Christ honored and respected by careful observance of the institutions of religion.

2. The institutions and ceremonies of the Old Testament help us to understand the truths of the New Testament.
3. Each of our hearts should be a guest chamber for the Lord.
4. It is a great privilege to have Jesus come to our homes, and make his home there.
5. Vers. 20-25. True self-examination questions ourselves, not others. "Is it I?" not "Is it you?"
6. Christ gives sinners, even the worst, abundant warning, that they may repent.
7. There are those who will not repent, even under Christ's perfect example and infinite love.
8. Ver. 26. As the Passover celebrates the birthday of the Jewish nation, so does the Lord's Supper the birthday of each Christian soul.
9. The simplest and most common things of daily life are employed to teach us of Christ, so that all may understand, so that everything shall remind us of him, and the whole daily life may be sanctified and transfigured.
10. Vers. 26-28. The great needs of the soul are satisfied by Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven, the love of God and Christ is manifested, and we have foretastes of heavenly communion with God and with one another.
11. The Lord's Supper, coming down to us through the ages, is irrefragable proof of the life and death of Christ.
12. Ver. 20. The symbols that remind us of Christ's death contain in them also a hope and promise of victory and heaven.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The teacher should endeavor to have his scholars read the accounts of the Lord's Supper in the other Gospels, and especially the three chapters of John which were spoken on this occasion, and the touching prayer Jesus offered at the close.

SUBJECT, — THE LORD'S SUPPER IN MEMORY OF CHRIST AND HIS WORK.

I. THE PASSOVER (vers. 17-25). The facts about the Passover, and its teaching. The events which occurred at this time in that upper room. Judas' treachery, and Jesus' efforts to bring him to repentance. The disciples led to heart searchings.

II. THE LORD'S SUPPER (vers. 26-30). Its nature and meaning. The duty and privilege of partaking, the need of remembering Christ, the sanctification of daily life. The feast of joy.

Illustration. The Palace Beautiful, of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, is the most perfect picture of the church and its ordinances, in all literature. The lions in the way before coming; the porter, Watchful, welcoming the pilgrim at the door; the examination by the gentle maidens, Piety, Prudence, and Charity, with their discourse at the supper; the sleeping in the Chamber of Peace; the study of the records of the place; the vision of the Delectable Mountains; and the putting-on the armor for future warfare, — make altogether a fitting picture of the "house built by the Lord of the hill, for the relief and security of pilgrims."

Illustration. EATING TOGETHER. Dr. Hamlin says that one of the greatest difficulties in christianizing the East is that families do not eat together. It is hard for us to realize how much benefit it is to our families to be gathered together two or three times a day around the table. Nothing but the necessity of eating could accomplish this. Eating together promotes friendship, sociability, generosity, and the intellectual life.

Illustration. THE SANCTIFICATION OF DAILY LIFE. Dr. Robinson says that "in the British Museum there is an ancient lamp, once picked up at Pompeii, which was relitted and refilled, and kept lighted in order to show its original design. Thus what was only a vile fragment of bronze, lying unnoticed amid the ashes and sand of a buried city, is rendered useful again by the mere commonplace service of new oil." Thus Jesus sanctifies the common objects of daily food, bread and fruit, by *pouring into* them new meaning, and making them symbols of the highest spiritual life.

Illustration. Mr. Ruskin says that in nature the most common shapes and forms are the most beautiful, and that you can almost tell what lines or curves are the most beautiful by finding out those which God has created in the greatest abundance. So Christ has taken for the ordinances of his kingdom some of the simplest and commonest things, — water, bread, and grape-juice. Every one can understand them, and yet they are as full of meaning and instruction as they are simple and abundant.

LESSON VIII.—MAY 20.

JESUS IN GETHSEMANE.—MATT. 26: 36-46.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.*—HEB. 5: 8.

TIME.—Thursday evening, from about midnight to one o'clock, April 6-7, A.D. 30. Immediately following the institution of the Lord's Supper.

PLACE.—Gethsemane; a garden on the western slope of Mount Olivet.

RULERS.—Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome (17th year). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (5th year); Herod Antipas, of Galilee (34th year).

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Mark 14: 32-42; Luke 22: 39-46; John 18: 1.

PRONUNCIATIONS.—Géth'sēm/ăně; Zěb/ědēe.

INTRODUCTION.

After instituting his memorial supper, and before he left the city for the Mount of Olives, as recorded in the last verse of the last lesson, Jesus foretold to his disciples their defection, and promised to meet them in Galilee after his resurrection. Peter, followed by the others, stoutly asserted that he never would deny his Lord. Then came the most earnest and loving words (recorded in John, chaps. 14-16) and the closing prayer (John 17); after which they went slowly and sadly out of the city by the light of the full Easter moon, crossed the Kedron, and entered the Garden of Gethsemane.

36. ¹Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

37. And he took with him Peter and ²the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Then cometh Jesus with ³⁶them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray. And he took with him Peter ³⁷and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and

¹ Mark 14: 32-35. Luke 22: 39. John 18: 1. ² Matt. 4: 21.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Agony of Sorrow.—Vers. 36-39. 36. Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane. It had been a favorite retreat. "For Jesus," says John, "ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples (John 18: 2).

GETHSEMANE. Josephus tells us that the suburbs of Jerusalem abounded with charming gardens and "paradises" (*War*, vi. 1: 1). Perhaps Gethsemane belonged to one who revered the Lord, and invited him to make free use of it during his stay. Or, perhaps, as Dr. W. M. Thomson suggests, it might, along with other suburban gardens and pleasure grounds, be thrown open on the great festival occasions to all faithful pilgrims who came from a distance (*The Land and the Book*). The name means *oil press*, "an emblem of trial, distress, agony," and was given to this garden because there probably was, or had been, a press there for the manufacture of olive oil. It was an enclosed garden or orchard, "where probably, amidst a variety of fruit trees and flowering shrubs, was a lowly, quiet summer retreat."—*Edersheim*. It was situated just across the Kedron from Jerusalem, near the foot of the western slope of Olivet, probably not far from the present garden of the same name. The present Gethsemane is about three-quarters of a mile from the wall of Jerusalem, is almost a square, 160 feet by 150 feet, and contains eight venerable olive-trees. **And saith unto the disciples:** to the main body of the disciples, the eight, Judas being elsewhere, and three going on farther with Jesus. **Sit ye here:** at the entrance of the garden, where they would form a guard against premature surprise. These eight were needed at this place, and besides were probably less fitted than the other three to enter the holy of holies of Jesus' experience of sorrow, as they had been to view his glory in the transfiguration.—*P.* **While I go and pray yonder:** to a more retired spot. Luke says he went about a stone's throw, say 150 to 200 feet; or, if from a sling, twice that distance.

37. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee: John and James. These three constituted the innermost of the concentric circles of the discipleship. Our

Lord felt for them a love of peculiar interest and complacency, because, as we may presume, he perceived in them some peculiar features of moral strength and nobleness on the one hand, or of moral sensitiveness, receptivity, and loveliness, on the other.—*Morison*. Beyond these three he went "a little farther" (ver. 39), and was alone in his retirement. These three would thus be an inner guard against intrusion, and give a sense of sympathy and companionship to Jesus while he was praying; and they, too, were to be praying while he prayed (Luke 22: 40).

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS. (I.) Not having a closet for prayer, Jesus had to make one on mountain top or in leafy shade. He had a secret place to which he habitually repaired. Have some spot sacred to communion with God. In the familiar place there is less distraction; only where we can be thoroughly alone with God, can we feel free to utter our deepest needs.—*R. Glover*.

(II.) Prayer and communion with his Father was Jesus' refuge in the hour of trouble.

(III.) Jesus was intensely human, as well as divine. And while he must "tread the winepress alone," it was a comfort to know that human friends and sympathy were near at hand.

(IV.) Those who live nearest to Jesus, and learn most of him, and imbibe most of his spirit, can be nearest him in his hours of conflict and victory, and on the mount of transfiguration. **And began to be sorrowful and very heavy:** or, as the Rev. Ver., *sore troubled*. So great was his sorrow now, that all which he had previously endured was as nothing; now, as for the first time, he *began* to experience sorrow. Mark says that he was "sore amazed," and the original, which is aptly rendered, implies that the disclosure of the sorrow came upon him, if not literally as a surprise, at least with new and unexpected force. Luke (22: 44) says he was "in an agony."—*Abbott*.

THE REASONS FOR CHRIST'S GREAT AGONY. Why was Christ so sorrowful, when many a martyr has gone triumphantly to his cross; and to many a hero death has been "welcome as the sight of sky and stars to prisoned men"? It was "something far deadlier than death" that weighed upon his soul. He bore his trial and reproaches and crucifixion more bravely than any hero. What bitter portion was in his Gethsemane cup? "The right understanding of the whole of this narrative," observes Alford, "must be acquired by bearing in mind the reality of the manhood of our Lord."

1. "Jesus was in the prime of manhood; life was just opening before him; his soul was eager for work, and conscious of rare capability to perform it; his death was the end of all human hope of achievement."—*Abbott*.

2. At the same time, his earthly career, in this dark hour, may have seemed to be a failure, if the future was veiled from his vision. Only a few disciples, instead of a glorious kingdom, and these few about to forsake him. Where were the fruits of his life?

3. "Into this one hour were crowded by prevision the combined horrors of the passion, its cruelty, its shame, its physical torment, its spiritual tortures."—*Abbott*. *The keenest anguish is felt, not in the actual endurance, but in the immediate expectation of calamity*. For in enduring them the pangs come one by one; in the near anticipation they are felt in the sum total.—*Glover*.

4. We are to remember that the more highly organized any being is, and the more capable he is of the highest joy, so much the more is he sensitive to pain. There are bodies to which a rough touch is more painful than a spear-thrust to others; a musician is tortured by



38. Then saith he unto them, ¹My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

39. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and ²prayed, saying, ³O my Father, if it be possible, ⁴let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, ⁵not as I will, but as thou wilt.

sore troubled. Then saith he ³⁸unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here, and watch with me. And he went ³⁹forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I

¹ John 12: 27.² Mark 14: 36.

Luke 22: 42.

Heb. 5: 7.

³ John 12: 27.⁴ Matt. 20: 22.⁵ John 5: 30; 6: 38. Phil. 2: 8.

a discord unnoticed by others. So that all the physical and the spiritual pain was more intense to Jesus than to others.

5. He saw, as no other can see, "the depths of Satanic hate and horror through which he was to pass." He had "a real experience of the full and concentrated power of the world's sin," which would permit them to kill one who loved them so, which would per- versely plunge into guilt and hell, in spite of all God could do to save them. It was the unspeakable horror of a world throwing away heaven and hope, and trampling on the most radiant manifestation of love God himself could manifest to them. "The very purity and love of Christ," says Glover, "while they saved him from all the pains which grow out of sin within us, yet laid him more open to the pains inflicted by others' sins upon him. *His very love for those who slew him made their hatred wound him, as a mother's heart is doubly wounded when a son strikes her.*"

6. "The sorrows of the garden were a part of the *atoning* passion of Jesus. He was our *Substitute*, and was bearing alone the burden of the sin of humanity. This, above and beyond everything else, must be the sting of this absolute grief of his soul." — *Meredith*. The unrighteousnesses of the world were, in some peculiar way, accumulated on his soul, and piled up to heaven like mountains upon mountains. He was "bearing the sin of the world" (John 1: 29). "The Lord had laid on him the iniquity of us all." Thus he was being "wounded for *our* transgressions, bruised for *our* iniquities" (Isa. 53: 5, 6). — *Morison*.

7. I cannot help feeling that part of Christ's state of mind in the garden was owing to the deep, awful sense of responsibility, the conception of the supreme importance to man of his standing firm at this crisis. There never was so great a crisis, and he was aware of its length and breadth. — *President Woolsey*.

II. **The Prayer of Earnestness and Submission.** — Vers. 38, 39. **38. Sorrowful, even unto death:** so burdened with sorrow that it seemed as if human nature could not live under it. Doubtless it would have crushed him to death had not the angels come and strengthened him (Luke 22: 43). **Tarry ye here, and watch with me:** keep awake to keep me company, and act as guard. — *G. W. Clark*.

39. And he went a little farther: beyond the three, into a still more retired spot, and yet probably so near that they could hear the recorded words of his prayer. **And fell on his face.** Mark, *fell on the ground*; Luke, *kneeled down*: i.e., as in the East, with the head bowed forward to the ground. The natural position of agonizing prayer; because in that position no thought whatever need be given to the body, but mind and will be wholly concentrated on the object of prayer. — *P*. When the flail of affliction is upon me, let me not be the chaff that flies in thy face, but the corn that lies low at thy feet. — *Philip Henry*. **O my Father.** There was comfort, hope, assurance, in this very word. His *Father* would give him every possible good, and withhold all possible suffering, and manifest his infinite loving-kindness and tender mercies. **If it be possible.** Observe the variation in expression. Matthew says, "if it be possible"; Mark, "all things are possible"; Luke, "if thou be willing." The spirit of the prayer is seen by combining the accounts thus: Father, all things are possible to thee; if thou canst accomplish thy divine purposes and let this cup pass from me, remove it. — *Abbott*. If it be possible to save men, and carry out the divine work of redeeming them, and bringing in the kingdom of God, in some other way than by his suffering and death. Might not God find some easier way? — *P*. **Let this cup pass from me:** "this hour," in Mark. The sufferers were represented as a bitter potion in a cup placed to his lips to drink.

THE INGREDIENTS OF THE CUP were certainly "not the mere present feebleness and prostration of the bodily frame; not any mere section of his sufferings, but the whole,—the betrayal, the trial, the mocking, the scourging, the cross, and all besides which our thoughts cannot reach." — *Alford*. "Injury, injustice, ingratitude, insolence, insult, misunderstanding,

40. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

will, but as thou wilt. And 40 he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me

cruelty, hate, shame," and the burden of the sin of the world, the bitterness of the vicarious sacrifice, all the horrors and darkness of the fruits of sin which a holy being could feel. **Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.** This is not merely the language of submission, but of petition; he does not merely say, If not as I will, then as thou wilt, but, Do not what I will, *rather* what thou wilt. — *Abbott.* Underneath that awful agony there lay, millions of fathoms deep, unmoved and immovable, the intense desire that his Father's wish and will should be done. That wish and will were in reality his own. And thus he both desired, and he did not desire, that the cup should pass from him. In the surface element of his feelings he desired that the cup should pass. In the ocean of feeling that lay beneath his desire was that it should not pass. And there was the divinest harmony between the two desires. In both there was a longing for what was good. But the good that was longed for in the undermost and deepest emotions was immeasurably the greater, and hence the Father willed that the cup should not pass altogether away, *and the Son's will was entirely the same.* — *Morison.*

LESSONS FROM CHRIST'S PRAYER. 1. He prayed for that which he wanted; he expressed his desires to God. And so it is right for us to entreat God for our soul's desires, even when we do not know what is God's will concerning them. 2. The prayer was simple, direct, brief, repeated; repeated not in vain repetitions, but in intensity of desire. 3. The prayer was earnest; his whole soul went out in it. 4. It "teaches the true office of prayer, viz., to change the will human into the will divine. See a sermon by F. W. Robertson, on Matt 26: 39." — *Abbott.* 5. But it also teaches us that prayer is not in vain; that it does influence God's actions, or the divine Son would not have set the example of prayer. 6. It was a prayer of faith because it was a prayer of submission. All true prayer implies submission to God, and the desire that God's will should be done rather than our own. This used to trouble me much,—that I must ask in *faith*, and yet not expect exactly the thing I asked for. But what kind of faith in God is that which does not believe God is wiser and better than we, and that his will is better for us than our own? Faith trusts God as to the *kind* of answer he shall give, as implicitly as for the *fact* of an answer; and the faith that cannot say as Christ did here, is not the faith that obtains the blessing. — *P.*

III. **The Weary Watchers.** — Vers. 40, 41. 40. **He cometh unto the disciples.** Perhaps to both the groups, first of the three, and then of the eight. All were alike sleeping. — *Ellicott.* **And findeth them asleep:** not sound asleep, as we may infer from ver. 43, but in a dozing, drowsy state. — *Schaff.* Sleeping for sorrow, says Luke. No other evangelist mentions the cause of their drowsiness; but Luke was a physician, and was prepared to speak on this point. — *Jacobus.* It is frequently supposed that this was proof of wonderful stupidity, and indifference to their Lord's sufferings. The truth is, however, that it was just the reverse: *it was proof of their great attachment, and their deep sympathy in his sorrows.* — *Barnes.* There is another symptom of grief, which is not often noticed, and that is *profound sleep.* I have often witnessed it even in mothers, immediately after the death of a child. Criminals, we are told by Dr. Akerman, the keeper of Newgate, in London, often sleep soundly the night before their execution. — *Dr. Rush's* "Diseases of the Mind," p. 319. We are to remember that it was very late, after midnight, long after their accustomed hour of sleep; they had been amid very exciting scenes, with their minds intensely strained, and now a reaction had come, of silent stillness and darkness. And yet we cannot help feeling that if they had had a deeper sympathy with Christ, and a fuller realization of the crisis, they would have kept awake, and not been found sleeping on guard. Christ's gentle reproof implies this. **Saith unto Peter:** because he had been foremost in promising and boasting how faithful he would be (vers. 33, 34). **Could ye not watch with me one hour?** This may be fairly taken as partly measuring the time that had passed since their master had left them. — *Ellicott.* Be sure it is something more than surface feeling, something more than impulse; it is good, honest, sober, considerate, patient *principle*, stayed up by prayer, that alone can *remain* awake, and outwatch the stars, and wait through the darkness, and conquer temptation, and do it all for the honor of the suffering and bleeding Master. — *F. D. Huntington.*

OBSERVE they forgot sorrow in sleep; Christ conquers it by prayer. Compare with the world's forgetfulness of sorrow the Christian's victory over it (Rom. 5: 3; 8: 35-39). — *Abbott.*

41. ¹ Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.

42. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

43. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

44. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

one hour? Watch and pray, ⁴¹ that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Again a second time he went ⁴² away, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came ⁴³ again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And he left them again, and ⁴⁴ went away, and prayed a third time, saying again the same

² Mark 13: 33; 14: 38. Luke 22: 40, 46. Eph. 6: 18.

41. Watch: keep awake, be on your guard; let every faculty be on the alert. **And pray.** Let your hearts be open to heaven and its influences, as well as to earth's. Use every possible means of help and defence in this your hour of need.

NOTE 1. The double duty; watching and praying must go together. As Jay says, "Prayer without watching is hypocrisy; and watching without prayer is presumption."

NOTE 2. Prayer is one of the means which enables us to keep awake and watchful. **That** (in order that) **ye enter not into temptation.** The enemy was close at hand. Spiritual dangers and temporal dangers, far beyond their conception, were secretly preparing to assail them. And nothing but watching and prayer could save them. Indeed, one result of their failure in both these was that they fell before the temptation. — *P.* Entering into temptation is another and a very different thing from being assailed by temptation. — *W. G. Butler.* He that enters of his own accord into temptation is already more than half overcome by it. — *P.* We cannot be too careful to keep out of the reach of sin; not to stand in the way of sinners; not to breathe pestilential air. — *Guthrie.* **The spirit:** the higher spiritual nature, with its will, conscience, affections. **Indeed is willing:** is ready, eager, desirous to do what is right. **But the flesh is weak:** the body, the physical nature, with all its natural tendencies and susceptibilities. These words are not an apology for the overpowering drowsiness of the disciples; but "they exhibit a reason why our Lord's disciples should give themselves to watchfulness and prayerfulness." For the weaker the flesh, the more they needed to be on their guard, and to have the aid of heaven. — *P.* Observe in this contrast the lesson for us. In both Christ and the disciples there is a willing spirit; in both, weakness of the flesh. But in Christ the spirit conquers the flesh, and he is victor; in the disciples the flesh conquers the spirit, and they are defeated. — *Abbott.*

IV. The Answer to his Prayer. — Vers. 42-44. **42. He went away again the second time, and prayed.** "More earnestly," says Luke, who adds the account of the bloody sweat (Luke 22: 44). His agony returned on him. Perhaps the very lethargy of his disciples might call up before his view the whole appalling succession of woes that were about to overtake him. — *Morison.* Now he prayed not that the cup might pass from him, but that he might be able to fulfil the divine will in completing his sacrifice (Matt. 26: 42). The continuance of the trial he accepts as God's answer to the petition, "Let this cup pass from me": he now asks only, "Thy will be done." The wish to be relieved from the passion is subdued; the will to fulfil the Father's will is supreme. — *Abbott.*

43. And he came and found them asleep again. The motive of this return we may reverently believe to have been, as before, the craving for human sympathy in that hour of awful agony. — *Plumptre.* It may also have been a rest or pause of relief in his praying, and to give another opportunity to the watchers to retrieve their former error.

44. And he prayed the third time, saying the same words. The fact is suggestive, as indicating that there is a repetition in prayer which indicates not formalism, but intensity of feeling. — *Plumptre.* He had the same needs, and the same words best expressed his feelings. He had come to the highest possible form of prayer.

THE ANSWER TO CHRIST'S PRAYER. Was Christ's prayer answered? and how? At the first glance it would seem to be our only example of unanswered prayer, for the cup did not pass from him, but he drank it all even to its bitterest dregs. But the Epistle to the Hebrews (5: 7) says it was answered. And a closer examination shows that it was answered in the best, the divinest way. It was answered in the three ways in which God answers our prayers.

1. By drawing us into closer communion and sympathy and submission to him. The man in a little boat trying to draw by a rope the large ship to himself, really comes nearer the ship,

45. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest : behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46. Rise, let us be going : behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

words. Then cometh he to the 45 disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest : behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed unto the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be go- 46 ing : behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me.

though most of the motion is of himself to the large vessel, not of the vessel toward himself. Jesus came in his human nature into the perfect peace and calmness of a submissive will, so that every desire and feeling and choice was in harmony with his Father. This is shown by the variation in the prayer the second and third time he prayed. 2. There was a direct and definite answer to his prayer. (1) An angel came and strengthened him (Luke 22 : 43). There are two ways of answering a prayer for the removal of a burden. In one, the burden is taken away, and we remain the same ; in the other, we are made so strong that the burden is no longer a burden to us ; as what would crush a child, is but sport to a man. This latter is by far the best way of receiving an answer. So Paul kept the thorn in his flesh, but God's grace was made sufficient for him. (2) "He was delivered from that which he feared, which was, lest by impatience and distrust, he should offend and disable himself to go on with his undertaking." — *M. Henry*. 3. The third answer to prayer is the giving, not that which we ask for in the form we ask it, but the soul of our prayer, the thing we in our deepest hearts want, and would ask for if we saw all things as God sees them. If clearly before the vision of Jesus there had appeared two choices, the one of escape from the cross, but with that also the failure of his mission, the triumph of evil, the loss of unnumbered souls, no crown, no glory, no abiding on the right hand of God ; and the other choice, that of the cross and its agony, but with it also the redemption of the world, the ineffable glory of God, the joys of millions of the saved, the crown of triumph over evil, — who doubts which would have been his real, innermost prayer. His prayer was answered, for the cross was changed to a crown, Gethsemane into paradise, death into immortal glory. — *P.*

V. **Rise, let us be going.** — Vers. 45, 46. 45. Sleep on now, and take your rest. His hour had passed. He could now watch for himself, and what little time remains they might rest so as to be prepared for the weary hours soon to come. Behold, the hour is at hand. A period of time, longer or shorter, probably intervened between this sentence and the last. After a little rest, Jesus sees in the distance the lanterns and the torches of Judas and his accomplices issuing from the city, and then he arouses the sleeping disciples. The hour is the hour of his betrayal, and the beginning of the last act of the great tragedy.

46. Rise, let us be going : not to escape, but to confront the traitor and his band. How sublimely does the heroism of our Lord reveal itself ! He is at hand that doth betray me. Instead of naming Judas, the Lord described him, and, in the description, verified his own former predictions regarding himself. — *Morison*.

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PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Every life has its Gethsemanes of sorrow, and may have its victories.
2. It is a striking fact, that both the Old and New Testaments give one and the same receipt for bearing trouble, — Prayer. — *Anon*.
3. Sorrow needs friends near, but its greatest burden must be borne alone.
4. Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance, but taking hold of God's willingness. — *Phillips Brooks*.
5. There is no sin in shrinking from what is painful, save when the shrinking is so violent that it resists the clear will of our Father. — *Cummings*.
6. The essence of faith in God is to say, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

7. No one is wise enough, or knows enough, to insist on having his own will.
 8. God's will is always infinitely better for us than our own.
 9. Prayer is best answered by giving the things God sees best, and which at last we shall see were the things we really desired. "God always answers in kind or in kindness."
- *Cecil*.
10. Christ's prayer in the garden is a model (1) of earnestness; (2) of directness; (3) of perseverance; (4) of faith; (5) of submission.
 11. Praying and watching must go together.
 12. Satan always rocks the cradle when we sleep at our devotions.
 13. It is a sad thing for the church to be sleeping while Christ is suffering and praying.
 14. The best people find the least fault with their brethren, and are the most ready to find excuses for the failures of others.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

CONNECT with the last lesson, and take your scholars out of that upper room after that wonderful prayer, and go with them on that sad midnight walk to Gethsemane.

SUBJECT, — CHRIST'S AGONY FOR OUR SINS, AND HIS VICTORY BY PRAYER.

I. THE GETHSEMANE SORROW (vers. 36-38). (1) The arrangement of the disciple guards; (2) the human nature of Jesus; (3) friends in sorrow; (4) retirement in the great inward struggle; (5) the causes of the agony of Christ, and how it should touch our hearts.

Illustration. *Courage, heroism.* A friend once called the attention of Napoleon to the blanched face of an officer as he was marching into battle, as showing that he was a coward. Napoleon replied that that man was the bravest officer in his army; for he saw clearly and felt keenly his danger, and yet went forward into the thickest of the battle.

II. SEEKING RELIEF BY PRAYER (vers. 39, 42, 44). The nature of true prayer taught by this prayer of Christ's. "Thy will be done," the expression of true faith and of wisdom.

Illustration. An ignorant man, just become a Christian, knew not how to pray. But he took the letters of the alphabet, and laid them before the Lord, saying, "Lord, I know not what I need or ought to pray for: take thou these letters, and spell out the prayer I ought to offer, and answer that." No man knows enough to insist on his own wishes, rather than to trust all to the wisdom and love of God.

III. THE ANSWERED PRAYER. Note the three ways in which prayer is answered, and show how all the kinds of answers were received by Jesus in response to his prayer.

Illustration. In his confessions St. Augustine relates that when a young man, having expressed a purpose to visit Rome, his mother remonstrated and prayed earnestly that he might be prevented from going, her reason being that she feared the effect upon the young man of the temptations and vices with which the great city abounded. He went, however, and during his stay there was converted to Christianity under the preaching of St. Ambrose. Augustine writes that the prayer was answered, though not in its outward form, but in its inward heart. What she really prayed for was that he might be saved from the ways of sin.

— *James Freeman Clarke*.

Illustrations. Trench's poem, *The Suppliant*, is an excellent illustration of one kind of answer to prayer; and Goethe's poem, *Strive and Wait and Pray*, is equally good, of another kind of answer. Both would be very effective read to the class.

IV. THE SLEEPING GUARD (vers. 41, 43, 45, 46). (1) The cause of the sleeping; (2) Jesus' excuse for them; (3) the danger of sleeping; (4) watching and praying; (5) verse 45.

Illustrate by the death penalty to those in the army who are found sleeping on guard, because of the evils that might overwhelm an army through the sleeping of one person. The danger to a sleeping church — a sleeping conscience, an unwatchful citizen.

LESSON IX. — MAY 27.

PETER'S DENIAL. — MATT. 26: 67-75.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* — 1 COR. 10: 12.

TIME. — Between two and three o'clock Friday morning, April 7, A.D. 30.

PLACE. — The palace of Caiaphas, the high priest; Jerusalem.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Mark 14: 65-72; Luke 22: 56-62; John 18: 15-27.

PRONUNCIATIONS. — An'nās; Cā'iāphās (Kā'yāphās); Nāz'ārēth; Nāzārēne'.

ORDER OF EVENTS. — 1. *The agony in the garden* (vers. 47-50). Midnight, Thursday, to one o'clock, Friday A.M.

2. *The betrayal and arrest.* About one o'clock Friday morning, near Gethsemane.

3. *Peter's rash defence* (vers. 51-54).

4. *Jesus taken to the palace of Annas* (John 18: 13).

5. *The disciples all forsake him and seek safety in flight* (ver. 56).

6. *Preliminary examination before Annas*, the ex-high-priest (John 18: 13). Palace of Annas; between one and two o'clock, Friday A.M.

7. *Preliminary examination before Caiaphas*, the high-priest (ver. 57; John 18: 19-24). Palace of Caiaphas.

8. *Examination before an irregular meeting of the Sanhedrim* (vers. 59-68). Between two and three o'clock, Friday morning. Palace of Caiaphas.

9. *The three denials of Peter* (vers. 69-75). In the same place.

67. ¹Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and ²others smote him with the palms of their hands,

Then did they spit in his ⁶⁷face and buffet him: and some smote him with the palms of

¹ Isa. 50: 6; 53: 3. Matt. 27: 30. ² Luke 22: 63. John 19: 3.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Mock Trial by the Leaders. — After the preliminary examinations before the high-priest (John 18: 19-24), the Sanhedrim, many of whose members had assembled in anticipation of the arrest of Jesus, gathered together in the council hall. (1) **THE COURT** consisted of chief priests, that is, the heads of the twenty-four priestly classes; scribes, that is, rabbis learned in the literature of the church; and elders, who were chosen from amongst the most influential of the laity. Jewish tradition puts the number of members at seventy-one. The high-priest usually presided. — *Abbott*. (2) **THEIR AUTHORITY.** The Sanhedrim had power to try those charged with capital offences, but it had no power to execute the sentence of death (John 18: 31). — *Andrews*. (3) **THE TRIAL.** Throughout the whole course of the trial, the rules of the Jewish law of procedure were grossly violated, and the accused was deprived of rights belonging even to the meanest citizen. He was arrested in the night, bound as a malefactor, beaten before his arraignment, and struck in open court during the trial. He was tried on a feast-day, and before sunrise. He was compelled to criminate himself, and this under an oath of solemn judicial adjuration; and he was sentenced on the same day of the conviction. *In all these particulars the law was wholly disregarded.* — *Prof. Greenleaf's* "Trial of Jesus," in the *Testimony of the Evangelists*. (4) **THE ACCUSATION.** The crime for which Jesus was condemned before the Sanhedrim was his alleged blasphemy; i.e., an assumption of power and authority which belonged to Jehovah alone (Matt. 26: 65). But when he was brought before Pilate they changed the accusation to one of treason against the Roman government, as the only one of which Pilate would take cognizance (Luke 23: 2). (5) **THE VERDICT.** Jesus was condemned to death; but according to the Roman law, a sentence pronounced before dawn was not valid. This test vote, however, they considered as settling the question. — *Schaff*. (6) **THE COUNCIL NOW ADJOURNED**, to meet at daybreak, when they could legally pronounce the sentence. In the mean time occurred the maltreatment by his lawless enemies described in the lesson, and the denials by Peter, at least the last of the three.

II. The Mockery by the Subordinates. — Vers. 67, 68. This took place in the interior court of the palace, after the adjournment of the court, and may have lasted till five o'clock, or near sunrise. This abusive mockery by underlings naturally followed the more formal mockery of their superiors. There is a great attraction to some natures in insulting those who are far above them, when they can do it safely. It seems to bring these grand people to their own low level.

67. **Then did they spit in his face.** Luke uses the imperfect tense, apparently as denoting a continued series of insults, not a single act. — *Lange*. Spitting in the face was regarded by the Jews as an expression of the utmost contempt (Deut. 25: 9; Numb. 12: 14), "a mark that the convicted is deemed as having degraded himself below claims to treatment as a member of society; as being utter filth and offscouring. There is scarcely pardon for

68. Saying, ¹ Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee? their hands, saying, Prophesy 68 unto us, thou Christ: who is he that struck thee?
69. ² Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a Now Peter was sitting with- 69

¹ Mark 14: 65. Luke 22: 64. ² Mark 14: 66. Luke 22: 55. John 18: 16, 17, 25.

one who spits on another, unless it be in a case like this. — *Prof. Isaac Hall*. This insult was punished with a fine of four hundred drachmas (\$60). Seneca records that it (spitting in the face) was inflicted at Athens upon Aristides the Just, adding, at the same time, that with considerable difficulty one individual was at last found willing to do it. — *Braune*. And buffeted him: struck him with their fists. Smote him with the palms of their hands: slapped him, viz., on the side of the head. And it was such a head! — *Morison*.

68. Saying, **Prophesy unto us**. Mark informs us that they first blindfolded him. Then some one struck him; and then if he were the Christ, the great prophet, to whom God revealed secret things, he could easily name the one who struck him. Jesus of course answered not a word, though he might in an instant have filled the room with the transfiguration glory. And the people imagined that they had found him out as an impostor. Luke adds, "And many other things blasphemously spake they against him." They were the blasphemers, not he.

MOCKING AT RELIGIOUS THINGS. One of the meanest, the most debasing, the most injurious things known among the apparently respectable, is sneering, mockery, and ridicule of sincere religious persons or doctrines. A sincere person, however far out of the way, is never to be ridiculed. True doctrines are perverted or dressed up in tawdry rags that do not belong to them, and the caricature is held up to ridicule. Nearly all the witticisms against religious doctrines are against manufactured caricatures. The worst possible construction is put upon actions, the most falsely colored lights are thrown upon truths, and then there is mockery and scorn. "Christian," "Puritan," "Methodist," and other glorious names have been given in mockery and ridicule. No right-minded persons will ever be found among the company of the mockers. — *P*.

III. Peter thrice denies his Lord. — Vers. 69-74. THE TIME was during the preliminary trial, and during the first part of the mockery; two o'clock and after.

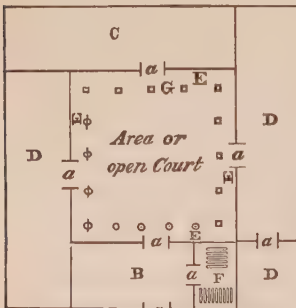
THE HARMONY OF THE NARRATIVES. It is difficult to construct a single narrative out of the four accounts. Each denial could not have consisted of a recognition by a single person and a single answer by Peter. Peter was in an excited crowd, at night, for probably two hours or more. Three single questions and three single answers would not have been all that occurred, but rather three episodes of suspicion and denial. The variations therefore go to prove not only the *independence*, but also the *truthfulness* of the narratives. The

four accounts agree that Peter was recognized on three occasions during the night; that he was on all three a denier of his Lord; but they mention different recognizers, especially in the second and third case; they record different replies and different circumstances. It follows that not one of the four consulted the narrative of the others, or derived his account from the same immediate source. — *Rev. Com.*

THE SURROUNDINGS. It will be necessary for those who desire to understand this narrative, to form for themselves a conception of Peter's precise whereabouts during such a grand crisis of his history. Eastern dwellings of the better sort appear to have been built around a four-sided court—an interior space like a private yard enclosed—frequently paved with flat flagging-stone, and open to the sky overhead. Into this area a passage from the street led by an arched opening through one side of the house. Heavy folding-doors guarded the entrance, leaving a smaller wicket-gate near by for the convenience of visitors, who came familiarly or one at a time. Usually this was kept by a porter.

Such, in all likelihood, was the general fashion of Caiaphas' palace. Simon Peter was inside of the wicket, standing there in the courtyard. — *C. S. Robinson*.

FIRST DENIAL. 69. **Now Peter sat without** (the judgment hall) in the palace (of Caiaphas, in the central open court). He had followed Jesus afar off as he was taken by the soldiers



PLAN OF ORIENTAL HOUSE.

a, a, Doors. B, Porch. C, Harem, D, D, Other rooms. E, E, Galleries between court and rooms. F, Stairs.

damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

70. But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

71. And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

72. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

73. And after a while came unto *him* they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for ¹thy speech bewrayeth thee.

out in the court: and a maid came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before ⁷⁰ them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when ⁷¹ he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and saith unto them that were there, This man also was with Jesus the Nazarene. And ⁷² again he denied with an oath, I know not the man. And ⁷³ after a little while they that stood by came and said to Peter, Of a truth thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech

¹ Luke 22: 59.

to the city. John also followed, and being known at the palace, he was enabled to gain admittance, and when Peter arrived, to have him admitted also (John 18: 15, 16). He was sitting with the servants and others around a fire, on account of the cold (Luke). ⁶ And a damsel: one of the maids of the high-priest (Mark); the doorkeeper who had admitted him (John). **Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.** Probably the statement was made in both cases in malicious banter, or light ridicule, as the charge evidently led to no further consequences. — *Lange*. The words were a free and easy exclamation. The "also" implies that they had been speaking of some other disciple, as Judas, or John, who was known to them. They may have expected to get from him some information about Jesus. — *Morison*.

70. But he denied before them all: who were gathered around the fire. I know not what thou sayest: I do not even understand what you mean; I have nothing to do with the affair. He practised evasion, which leads to direct lying, often to perjury. Christ's cause is not helped, nor his people defended, by crafty policy. Peter drew his sword in the presence of an armed band, but lied to a bantering maid-servant. — *Rev. Com.* Peter, though denying Christ, yet was testifying to his prophetic power; for he was doing just as Jesus had foretold. — *M. C. Hazard*.

SECOND DENIAL. 71. And when he was gone out into the porch: the outer entrance to the court. He had retreated there, either to avoid observation, away from the light of the fire, or to be ready to escape, if necessary. Another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there. Luke says "another" (masculine), and John "they." Probably several spoke, some to him, and some to their companions. This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. Some of them very probably saw him in the garden, when the arrest was made; and others had seen him with Jesus in his labors.

72. And again he denied with an oath. His first lie is "whirling him into a vortex of meanness and sin." I do not know the man. Another rapidly downward step into a more positive lie and unblushing perjury.

THIRD DENIAL. In the court, to which Peter had returned, opposite to the door into the judgment hall, so that Jesus could look upon him (Luke 22: 61).

73. And after a while: about an hour after (Luke 22: 59). They that stood by. The main charge was prominently made by *one*, — a kinsman of Malchus, who had seen Peter in the garden, and was known to St. John from his acquaintance with the high-priest's household (John 18: 26). — *Farrar*. For thy speech bewrayeth thee: "betrayeth"; shows



COURT OF ORIENTAL HOUSE.

74. Then ¹began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

bewrayeth thee. Then began ⁷⁴ he to curse and to swear, I know not the man. And straightway the cock crew.

¹ Mark 14: 71.

that thou art a Galilean (Mark), and therefore one of his disciples, or why else art thou here?—*Morison*. The Galileans were unable to pronounce the gutturals distinctly, and they lisped, pronouncing *sh* like *th*.—*Cambridge Bible for Schools*. Happy he whose speech bewrays him to be a disciple of Christ!—*Henry*.

74. Then began he to curse: or "to call down curses on himself," if what he said was not true. He now lost all self-control. And to swear: to call God to witness that it was true. It is more than probable that Peter, in his earlier life as a fisherman, before his conversion, had been in the habit of using profane language; and now, in the sudden surprise of temptation, the old habit broke forth anew, as the language of youth, long unused, is almost certain to be employed in times of great excitement. It is a long and hard discipline that entirely conquers the sins of our youth.—*P*.

IV. The Causes which led to Peter's Denial.—Men fall on the side towards which they lean.—*Guizot*. Backsliding is earliest in the "heart"; then it shows itself in one's "ways" (Prov. 14: 14).—*C. S. Robinson*.

1. A certain distance or separation from Christ in his feelings. Peter had been rebuked. "Christ's plan was to conquer by suffering; Peter's by resisting" (*Glover*). Peter's self-love was wounded by Christ's rebuke (vers. 52-54).—*C. S. Robinson*.

2. Ignorance was another cause. Peter failed to comprehend the teaching which Jesus had repeatedly given of the necessity of his sufferings and death.

3. It was because his piety, at that period of his history, was fashioned more by feeling than by principle. Peter's spirituality blew in a gusty sort of way, because his theological groundwork was faulty. Now, let it be remembered that for nobody is there any hope of standing firm under stress of opposition, if his piety has been nurtured only in tender hours of emotional enjoyment. Spiritual impulses will be dangerously irregular and intermittent, unless they have the help of steady purpose underneath. The grand doctrines of the cross must be wrought into the very fibre of one's soul, as the granite soil and the winter tempests of the mountains are wrought into the gnarls of the oak which the shipwright loves.—*C. S. Robinson*.

4. Peter's courage was great; but as yet it was too much outward and physical, and too little the courage of faith, of principle, of duty. CONTRAST Peter and John. "John went straight through the court where those taunting maids and gibing soldiers were, and no one put a question to him. Pretty soon after that, we see him issuing orders to the servants," while Peter, in his desire to slink out of sight as a Christian, is hounded and taunted.

5. Peter followed afar off. Had he kept nearer to Jesus, he would have been safer from sin.

6. Peter was also separated from his brethren. Had the disciples kept closer together, they would have been bolder and stronger.

7. During the hour of Christ's agony, Peter failed in watchfulness and prayer, and so prepared the way for his fall under temptation.

8. Peter's self-sufficiency was another step to his fall. He was sure that he would never fail, and made the strongest assertions of his steadfastness. But "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

9. He entered into temptation. Had he gone into the court as an open follower of Jesus, he would have been safe; but he took a place among the enemies of Jesus as one of them.

10. It is always the tendency of sin to involve one more and more in its toils. It is like the quicksand, or the undertow of the tide.—*P*.

V. Peter's Repentance.—Vers. 74, 75. We see, above, the list of Peter's sins, and their enormity: his cowardice, his lack of faith, his rashness, his desertion of his Master, his fellowship with the bad, his lying, his cursing and swearing, his perjury. Now, what led him to see his sins, and what did he do when he realized them?

74. And immediately the cock crew: while he was denying Jesus with cursing. In the days when no clocks marked the time, "cock-crowing" had become a familiar phrase, as with us, for the earliest hour of dawn, or about three o'clock. When the cock-crowing is spoken of alone, this is the hour meant. Mark mentions two cock-crowings, the first being earlier. In Matthew only the main one is mentioned.

75. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus; which said unto him, ¹ Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

And Peter remembered the 75 word which Jesus had said, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

¹ Mark 14: 30. Luke 22: 61, 62. John 13: 38.

75. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus: verse 34. This awakened Peter to a sense of what he was doing. It made him think thereon (Mark 14: 72). Another thing made him remember. "Just then, according to Luke (22: 61), our Lord 'turned and looked on Peter' with a glance of sadness and pity, that went like lightning to the quick of his conscience." — *Schaff*. And remembering the Saviour's own words at the table (Luke 22: 31), "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; *but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not,*" may we not say that *this prayer fetched down all that there was in that "look"* to pierce and break the heart of Peter, to keep it from despair, to work in it "repentance unto salvation not to be repented of," and at length, under other healing touches, to "restore his soul"? — *J., F. and B.* **And he went out** (of the palace), **and wept bitterly.** He went out, not as Judas, into the night of despair, but, as has been beautifully said, "to meet the morning dawn." If the angel of innocence had left him, the angel of repentance took him gently by the hand. — *Farrar*. Oh, how gladly would he have wept, if he could, a whole sea of salt tears! — *Morison*.

NOTE 1. The depths and intensity of his repentance.

NOTE 2. Contrast it with the false repentance of Judas. Judas was sorry rather for the consequences of his sin, than for the guilt of it. And instead of living to remedy all the possible results of his crime, he hung himself. Still of himself he was thinking, not of the cause.

NOTE 3. To the repentant Peter restoration was possible; and after a season of bitterest sorrow it was granted fully and freely (John 21: 15-17).

NOTE 4. Peter was permanently changed for the better by his experience, and he uses this experience in urging others to escape the snare into which he had fallen (1 Pet. 3: 15; 5: 6-10).

NOTE 5. The sincerity of his repentance and restoration was proved by a long life of devoted service to his Master; as, for instance, Acts 4: 8; 12: 19. — *P.* "We find, in tracing Peter's career, that his zeal was mixed with many inconsistencies. But Christ saw that he he had in him the noble material of a vital and victorious apostleship. He refashioned him into a self-commanding, as well as an eager, champion, and at last made him first and foremost of the twelve companions of his Lord." — *F. D. Huntington*. If I could paint a portrait of Peter, I would write on every hair of his head, *forgiveness of sins*. — *Luther*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Professor Greenleaf's *Testimony of the Evangelists* gives three accounts of the trial of Jesus: one by Salvador, from the Jewish point of view; the others by M. Dupin, a French lawyer, and Professor Greenleaf, of the Law School of Harvard University. Wayland's *Salvation by Christ*, "The Fall of Peter"; sermon by E. T. Fitch, in *National Preacher*, No. 2, "The Repentance of Peter"; Tholuch's *Light from the Cross*, "Peter's Apostasy"; *Sermons by Saurin*, "Peter's Denial of his Master."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Vers. 67, 68. They who jest at religion, make light of Christians, strive to injure the cause of Christ, would have mocked him and spit upon him when upon earth. — *G. W. Clark*.

2. People often ridicule their best friends, the highest truths, the sources of their greatest blessings.

3. Vers. 69-74. Peter's fall is recorded, because the Gospel scorns to deny the actual defects of good men, because the truth is helpful to others who fail, showing the possibility of recovery, and the only way to recovery.

4. It is dangerous to follow Christ afar off: (1) it leads into temptation; (2) it is away from the source of help and strength; (3) it brings the weakness of an evil conscience.

5. Those follow Christ afar off (1) who follow from curiosity; (2) those who are far from Christ in spirit and sympathy; (3) those who do little for the conversion of the world for whom Christ died.

6. Those who neglect to watch and pray before the temptation comes, are almost sure to fall before temptation.

7. Confidence in self, with distrust of God, is the short road to a fall.

8. The lesson for each Christian is found here. In a slinking, cowardly, unmanly desire to be a follower of Christ out of sight is the worst peril any one can dare. — *C. S. Robinson.*

9. He who is not in the place of duty is peculiarly exposed to temptations.

10. Without the Spirit, St. Peter trembled at the voice of a maid-servant; with the Spirit, he withstood princes and kings. — *S. Jerome.*

11. We see how commonplace is even the most notable of human sins. This denial of his Lord will always be quoted as the characteristic wickedness of Simon Peter. It stands out in history as one of the vast crimes of the world and the race. And now we have seen precisely what it was. A servant-girl taunted a disciple with having been seen with Jesus in Gethsemane; and he angrily told her he did not know the man, nor understand what she meant by the charge. — *C. S. Robinson.*

12. One sin leads to another. Sin goes on from bad to worse.

13. The more swearing, the more lying, as a rule.

14. It is never right or safe to tell a lie, even when we think it will save our lives.

15. No one can hurt Christ as a friend can hurt him. — *J. Parker.*

16. Ver. 74. The sins of the past break out anew in times of unexpected temptation.

17. Nature itself reminds us of our sins.

18. The look of Jesus, the contrast of his holy life and love with our deeds, convicts us of sin.

19. The first thing for a sinner to do is to repent and forsake his sins.

20. Through his victory at last Peter was enabled to strengthen his brethren (Luke 22: 32; 1 Pet. 5: 6-10).

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The intervening history necessarily comes in as a part of this lesson, and the story should be written clearly and indelibly on the memories of our scholars. Follow the order of events — trace out the journeys, and note the places on the map.

SUBJECT, — DENYING CHRIST.

I. CHRIST DENIED BY HIS ENEMIES (vers. 67, 68). Judas denied him by betraying him. The Jewish leaders denied him by their unjust mockery of a trial. The servants and soldiers denied him by their insolent mockery.

MODERN WAYS of denying Christ, and making a mockery of religion.

II. CHRIST DENIED BY HIS FRIENDS (vers. 69-74). By all the disciples, in that they forsook him and fled; by Peter, in the highest degree. NOTE the steps by which he went on to his supreme sin.

Illustration. One of the brightest of our modern writers has given us a simile somewhat like this. If a careless reader lets fall a drop of ink in among the leaves of a book he is just closing, it will strike through the paper both ways. When he opens the volume again, he can begin with the earliest faint appearance of the stain, and measure by its increase his progress towards the great black point of defacement. Open it now anywhere, and he will detect some traces of the coming spot. He can turn back to it; he can turn forward from it. So of this great base act of the apostle Peter, which we call emphatically the denial. It is a stain in the middle of his life. But for a long time, on the previous pages of his life he had been preparing for this disaster. — *C. S. Robinson*, in "S. S. Times."

Illustration. NEVER RIGHT TO TELL A LIE. To defend the "lie of necessity" is, of all perversions, the worst; the defender thereby exposes the essentially depraved character of his mental processes. That a lie should even so much as occur to you as a possible mode of escape from certain embarrassments, and that you should then seriously consider whether it may not be allowable to make use of it, — this is the true source of your perverseness. The well-known illustration of the schools may make our thoughts clearer: A man pursued by his enemy with a drawn dagger hides himself in your presence. His enemy comes up, and asks you where he is. If you tell the truth, an innocent man is murdered; therefore, so some conclude, you must tell a lie. But how is it that these hasty reasoners rush so quickly to the crooked way, when so many possibilities are open to them on the straight path? In the first place, why should you tell the questioner either the truth or a lie? Why not some third alternative? For example, that you are not bound to give him any answer; that he seems to have a very evil purpose in his question; that you advise him in all kindness to give it up; that, beside this, you will take the part of the pursued and defend him at the risk of

your own life, which, moreover, it is your absolute duty to do. But in that case, you urge, his rage would be turned against you. And how, I pray, does it happen that you calculate only upon this one result? Since a second one is certainly among the possibilities, — namely, that your adversary, struck with the justice and the boldness of your resistance, may withdraw from the pursuit of his enemy. But suppose that he should attack you. Why will you at all events avoid that? For it is your unquestionable duty to protect the fugitive with your own body. And now it plainly appears that the immediate object of your lie was not to save your neighbor's life, but only to come out of this affair with a whole skin; and, moreover, yours was no actual danger, but only one of two possible cases. It seems, then, that you were willing to lie merely to avoid the remote possibility of coming to harm! In the worst case, you can only die; and death releases you from all further obligation to the assailed man, while at the same time it saves you from the danger of a lie. — *Fichte*, "System of Ethics."

Illustration. PETER'S SWEARING. Peter's outburst of profanity was doubtless the breaking forth of an early habit which he had overcome as a disciple of Christ. It is hard to get wholly rid of early sins. I remember an old house in a country village of Massachusetts which was once a tavern, with the bar-room where now is the parlor. But a friend who lived in the house said that, though more than 20 years had passed away, yet if that parlor were kept closed a few days, it would smell of the rum and tobacco which defiled it in its early bar-room days. — *P.*

III. REPENTANCE. What called Peter to repentance? The elements of his repentance. The proofs that it was true. The contrast with that of Judas. Peter's restoration. Hope for us all.

LESSON X. — JUNE 3.

JESUS CRUCIFIED. — MATT. 27: 33-50.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* — PHIL. 2: 8.

TIME. — Friday, April 7, A.D. 30; from nine o'clock A.M. to three o'clock P.M.

PLACE. — Calvary, just without the gate of Jerusalem, probably on the north; called also Golgotha.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Roman Empire. Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judæa; Herod Antipas, tetrach of Galilee, — both subject to Rome.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Mark 15: 22-37. Luke 23: 33-46. John 19: 17-30.

ORDER OF EVENTS. — (1) The denials of Peter (Matt. 26: 69-75. Our last lesson). *Court of Caiaphas' palace; northeast angle of Zion, opposite the temple gate. Two to three o'clock, Friday morning.*

(2) The Sanhedrim reassemble at daybreak, and condemn Jesus (Matt. 27: 1). *Council chamber near the temple-gate Shushan. About five o'clock Friday morning.*

(3) Jesus sent to Pilate. *From the palace of Caiaphas to Pilate's palace, adjoining the tower of Antonia. About five to half-past five o'clock (Matt. 27: 2).* This was to obtain power from Pilate to put Jesus to death.

(4) Pilate's interview with the Jews outside the judgment hall of the palace (John 18: 28-32; Luke 23: 2). *About six o'clock A.M. (John 19: 14, which refers to the beginning of Pilate's trial). Jesus within the judgment hall.*

(5) Pilate examines Jesus within the judgment hall, but finds no fault (Matt. 27: 11, 14; Mark 15: 2-5). *Pilate's palace. About six o'clock Friday morning.*

(6) Pilate sends Jesus to Herod (Luke 23: 5-12). *Herod's palace, in the northwest angle of Zion. Still early Friday morning.*

(7) Jesus again before Pilate. Acquittal (Luke 23: 13-16). *Pilate's palace. Six to seven o'clock.*

(8) Jesus or Barabbas (Matt. 27: 15-18; Mark 15: 6-10).

(9) Message of warning from Pilate's wife, while people are deciding (Matt. 27: 19).

(10) Barabbas chosen. Cries of "Crucify him!" (Matt. 27: 20-23; Mark 15: 11-13).

(11) Efforts of Pilate to save Jesus (Matt. 27: 23; Mark 15: 12-14; John 19: 4-16). *Seven to eight o'clock.*

(12) Pilate washes his hands (Matt. 27: 24, 25).

(13) Sentence of crucifixion (Mark 15: 15; Luke 23: 24, 25). *Pilate's palace. Eight o'clock.*

(14) Scourging and mockery (Matt. 27: 26-30; Mark 15: 16-19; John 19: 1-3).

(15) Judas commits suicide (Matt. 27: 3-10).

(16) Jesus led away to be crucified (Matt. 27: 31; Mark 15: 20). *About half-past eight.*

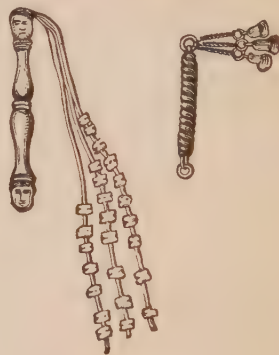
PRONUNCIATIONS.—Cā'īāphās (Kā'yāfās); Cāl'vāry; Cŷrē'ně; Ēlī'; Gōl'gōthā; Lāmā'; Sābāchthā'ni; Sān'hēdrīm.

INTRODUCTION.

In our last lesson we left Peter weeping bitterly over his fall. Jesus was still within the judgment hall of Caiaphas' palace, subjected to insults and mockeries while waiting for the regular meeting of the Sanhedrim at sunrise. The events which followed are given above, in their order. A little before nine o'clock Jesus approaches the scene of his crucifixion.



CROWN OF THORNS.



SCOURGES.

33. ¹ And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

And when they were come 33
unto a place called Golgotha,
that is to say, The place of

¹ Mark 15: 22. Luke 23: 33. John 19: 17.

EXPLANATORY.

I. On the Way to the Cross.—Ver. 33. *Via Dolorosa, between Castle Antonia and Calvary. About half-past eight Friday morning.* At Pilate's palace (probably the Castle Antonia) the terrible preparations were soon made,—the hammer, the nails, the cross, the very food for the soldiers who were to watch under each cross. Four soldiers would be detailed for each cross, the whole being under the command of a centurion. As always, the cross was borne to the execution by him who was to suffer on it,—perhaps his arms bound to it with cords. Ordinarily the procession was headed by the centurion, or rather, preceded by one who proclaimed the nature of the crime, and carried a white wooden board on which it was written. *Thus* Jesus came forth bearing his cross. He was followed by two malefactors, “robbers,” probably of the class then so numerous, that covered its crimes by pretensions of political motives. These two also would bear each his cross, and probably be attended each by four soldiers.—*Eidersheim.* Then followed a great multitude,—many with eager curiosity; priests, exulting over their enemy; his mother, with other women, weeping at the loss of her son, and their teacher and friend.

On the way Jesus staggered under the weight of his cross. The soldiers seized on a man coming in from the country, one Simon, from Cyrene in Africa, and compelled him to aid Jesus in bearing his cross.

33. **And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha.** Golgotha is a Hebrew word, meaning a skull. From its Latin equivalent, *calvaria*, comes our English word Calvary. The place was doubtless so named because it was a small knoll in the shape of a skull. The exact site is unknown. But we know that it was (1) apparently a well-

34. ¹They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink.

35. ²And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, ³They parted my gar-

a skull, they gave him wine ³⁴ to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted it, he would not drink. And when ³⁵ they had crucified him, they

¹ Ps. 69: 21.² Mark 15: 24. Luke 23: 34. John 19: 24.³ Ps. 22: 18.

known spot; (2) outside the gate (compare Heb. 13: 12); but (3) near the city (John 19: 20); (4) on a thoroughfare leading into the country (Luke 23: 26); and (5) contained a "garden" or "orchard" (John 19: 41).—*Maclear*. There are two leading hypotheses as to its site: (1) An ancient tradition from the fourth century places Golgotha a short distance north of Zion, within the present wall, where has been built the church of the Holy Sepulchre. But it has been almost conclusively proved by Dr. Selah Merrill that this site was within the ancient wall, as it is within the modern wall, and therefore this place cannot be the true site of Calvary. (2) There is a rapidly growing conviction (especially favored by such scholars as Hon. Selah Merrill, Sir J. W. Dawson, Bishop Gobat, and others) that the true site is upon the knoll containing the cave called the Grotto of Jeremiah. It is "outside of the north wall of the city, but near to it, —about 100 yards distant." It is a knoll of rock, about 60 feet high, of rounded form, covered with shallow soil and grass, in full view of the great northern road from the city.



"THE PLACE OF A SKULL" (near Jeremiah's Grotto).

"In its form, and certain old tombs which simulate sockets of eyes, it has a remarkable resemblance, from some points of view, to a skull partly buried in the ground." — *Dawson*.

It is much better for the purity of the Christian religion that the sites of these sacred places, like the grave of Moses and the site of Calvary, should be unknown, lest such places be regarded as a special means of holiness, obscuring the fact that all true holiness is spiritual in the heart. — *P*.

II. **The Crucifixion.** — Vers. 34, 35. *Nine o'clock in the morning; the third hour of the day.*

34. They gave him (just before he was nailed to the cross) vinegar to drink, mingled with gall: *i.e.*, common sour wine, such as the soldiers used, was mingled with a powerful narcotic drug, bitter, but offered as an anæsthetic, to stupefy and dull the sense of pain. — *Lange*. This was a Jewish rather than a Roman custom. "Some of the wealthy ladies of Jerusalem charged themselves with this office of mercy." — *Lightfoot*. When he had tasted thereof (and so recognized the kindly act, and learned what it was), he would not drink. Why? (1) He deliberately chose to have all his powers alert at this last hour, "so that nothing should dull his consciousness of suffering nor the clearness of his communion with God." — *Abbott*. (2) Because he would drink to the very dregs the cup of suffering which God gave him; for only thus could he make full atonement for the sins of the world. "He whom some modern sceptics have been base enough to accuse of feminine feebleness and cowardly despair, preferred rather 'to look death in the face' — to meet the king of terrors without striving to deaden the force of one agonizing anticipation, or to still the throbbing of one lacerated nerve."

35. And they crucified him. Death by the cross was the most terrible, the most dreaded, and shameful punishment of antiquity; — a punishment, the very name of which, Cicero tells us, should never come near the thoughts, the eyes, or ears of a Roman citizen, far less his person. It was not a Jewish punishment; it was the punishment inflicted by heathenism, which knew no compassion or reverence for man as man, on the worst criminals. — *W. G. Butler*.

CRUCIFIXION. The victim was stripped naked of all his clothes. He was laid down upon the implement of torture. His arms were stretched along the cross-beams, and at the centre of the open palms the point of a huge iron nail was placed, which, by the blow of a mallet, was driven home into the wood. Then, through either foot separately, or possibly

ments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

36. ¹ And sitting down they watched him there ;

parted his garments among them, casting lots; and they 36 sat and watched him there.

¹ V. 54. Mark 3: 2. Luke 20: 20.

through both together, as they were placed one over the other, another huge nail tore its way through the quivering flesh. To prevent the hands and feet being torn away by the weight of the body, which could not "rest upon nothing but four great wounds," there was, about the centre of the cross, a wooden projection strong enough to support, at least in part, a human body, which soon became a weight of agony. And then the accursed tree, with its living, human burden hanging upon it in helpless agony, and suffering fresh tortures as every movement irritated the fresh rents in hands and feet, was slowly heaved up by strong arms, and the end of it fixed firmly in a hole dug deep in the ground for that purpose. — *Farrar*. The body was terribly wrenched when the cross was raised and dropped into its place: the concussion often dislocated the limbs. — *Abbott*. The feet of the sufferer were only a foot or two above the ground, — a fact of some weight, as showing that Jesus suffered in the midst of his persecutors, and not looking down from above their heads. — *Schaff*. Inflammation of the wounds in both hands and feet speedily set in, and ere long rose also in other places where the circulation was checked by the tension of the parts; intolerable thirst and ever increasing pain resulted; the blood, which could no longer reach the extremities, rose to the head, swelling the veins and arteries in it unnaturally, and causing the most

agonizing tortures in the brain. The weight of the body itself, resting on the wooden pin of the upright beam, the burning heat of the sun scorching the veins, and the hot wind which dried up the moisture of the body, made each moment more terrible than before. — *Geikie*. To all the physical torture we must in this case add the result of these upon a soul sensitive and capable of suffering beyond all human comparison; the effect of ingratitude, of



loneliness, of taunts from those who represented his own chosen people; and above all, his state of soul, as he consciously bore the sins of men. — *Schaff*. Death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death can have of the horrible and ghastly, — dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, publicity of shame, long continuance of torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of untended wounds, — all intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but all stopping just short of the point which would give to the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. Such was the death to which Christ was doomed. — *Farrar*.

THE FIRST WORD FROM THE CROSS. — *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* (Luke 23: 34). Probably spoken in the height of the agony, when the cross with the Victim upon it was dropped, with a sudden wrench, into its place in the ground. But it was even then a word for others, not for himself. Sublime self-forgetfulness. NOTE for whom, and for what, he prays.

III. **The Watchers.** — Vers. 35-37. ENEMIES AND FRIENDS. 35. **And parted his garments.** The four soldiers on guard parted them among themselves, except his tunic, or under-garment, for which, since it was woven in one piece, they cast lots (John 19: 23, 24). *This was soon after nine o'clock.* **That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet** (omitted in the Rev. Ver., as an accidental interpolation from John 19: 23, 24, where it rightly belongs). The Scripture referred to is quoted from Ps. 22: 18, Septuagint version. It is a typical prophecy.

36. **And sitting down they watched him there:** the four soldiers on guard, lest friends should come and take him down, and preserve his life. Josephus had a friend who was taken down from the cross and lived. — *G. W. Clark*. They could also, like the world, watch the Son of God making atonement for sin, and realize so very little of the greatest event in the world's history then taking place before their eyes. FRIENDS also were watching, as we learn from John 19: 25. The three Marys were there, — Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary, the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene, and other women (Matt. 27: 55, 56), watching afar off. John, at least, of the disciples was near by (John 19: 26). Let us admire the faithfulness and love of these friends of Jesus.

37. And set up over his head his accusation written, **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

38. ¹Then were there two thieves crucified with him; one on the right hand, and another on the left.

39. ²And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

40. And saying, ³Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. ⁴If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

41. Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said,

42. He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

And they set up over his head ³⁷his accusation written, **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.** Then are there crucified with ³⁸him two robbers, one on the right hand, and one on the left. And they that passed by reviled ³⁹him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like ⁴¹manner also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved ⁴²others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe

¹ Isa. 53: 12. Mark 15: 27. Luke 23: 32, 33. John 19: 18. ² Ps. 22: 7; 109: 25. Mark 15: 29.
Luke 23: 35. ³ Matt. 26: 61. John 2: 19. ⁴ Matt. 26: 63.

37. And set up over his head: upon the upright of the cross, *his accusation*, written in the three languages then in common use, — Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (John 19: 20), — so that all could read. This is **Jesus the king of the Jews**. Thus in the chief tongues of men was proclaimed in jest what became a living truth, — that Jesus is king: the king to whom all nations and peoples should yield allegiance. And it was through the crucifixion that Jesus became king, and founded his kingdom, and drew men to be his loyal subjects. — *P.* In the midst of death Christ began to triumph. The cross began to change its own nature; and instead of an engine of torture, it became a throne of majesty. — *Flavel*.

IV. **The Two Robbers.** — Ver. 38. Then: that is, after the crucifixion of our Lord had become a completed fact. **Were there two thieves:** rather, robbers; in all probability partners in the crime of Barabbas. — *Cambridge Bible*. Thus did Pilate unconsciously fulfil prophecy, "And he was numbered with the transgressors" (Mark 15: 28; Isa. 53: 12).

THE CONVERTED ROBBER. One of these robbers, while hanging on the cross, was converted and forgiven, and began even then that new life which could be developed and nurtured in paradise. See the touching story in Luke 23: 39-43. The divine record contains *but one* such example, but it contains *one*: *but one*, to save us from presumption; one, to save us from despair. — *Prof. Kendrick*.

THE SECOND WORD FROM THE CROSS was now spoken, toward noon, to the penitent robber: *To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise* (Luke 23: 43, 44).

V. **The Mocking Crowd.** — Vers. 39-44. *Continued from nine o'clock till noon.* 39. They that passed by: on the thoroughfare, near which the crosses stood. Reviled him: his crucified condition was in such contrast with the title over him, and with his own words, as to excite the mirth of the crowd.

40. Thou that destroyest the temple: a perversion of Jesus' words (John 2: 19-21) which were brought against him at his trial (Matt. 26: 61). But it is remarkable that at this very hour the words he really spoke were in the process of being fulfilled. **If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross:** for if he was the Son of God, he would have abundant power to come down, but no human power of his own could release him. But in truth, if he had used his power and come down, it would have proved him not to be the Son of God. He did not come down, *because he was the Son of God.* — *P.*

41. Likewise the chief priests. These spoke to one another, not to Jesus.

42. He saved others; himself he cannot save: implying that his saving others was only imaginary, a cheat. But "if he had saved himself by coming down from the cross, he could not have saved others." — *Pres. Woolsey*. One of the hardest things to bear was these taunts of those whom he came to save, the very taunts showing that they were unwilling to be saved.

42. And we will believe him: but they were mistaken; they would have found some other excuse for not believing, for he did something more wonderful — he rose from the grave, and yet they did not believe.

43. ¹ He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

44. ² The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

45. ³ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46. And about the ninth hour, ⁴ Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, ⁵ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

47. Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias.

48. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, ⁶ and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

on him. He trusteth on God; 43 let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God. And the 44 robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach.

Now from the sixth hour 45 there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Je- 46 sus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some of them that 47 stood there, when they heard it, said, This man calleth Elijah. And straightway one of 48 them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. And the rest said, 49 Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to save him,

¹ Ps. 22: 8.

² Mark 15: 32.

³ Luke 23: 39.

⁴ Amos 8: 9.

⁵ Mark 15: 33.

⁶ Luke 23: 44.

⁷ Heb. 5: 7.

⁸ Ps. 22: 1.

⁹ Ps. 69: 21.

¹⁰ Mark 15: 36.

¹¹ Luke 23: 33.

¹² John 19: 29.

42, 43. If he be the King of Israel . . . for he said, I am the Son of God. Their logic seemed good from their point of view. If he was unable to deliver himself, how could he deliver others? If he can be crucified by men, how can he be great enough to be the Saviour of men? Their argument seems invincible, till we see that he could not be the Christ and Saviour *unless* he had been crucified. — *P.*

44. The thieves also: either both did at first, and then one changed; or the expression is simply a general one.

THE THIRD WORD FROM THE CROSS *was spoken probably toward noon*, to his mother, standing near the cross, with John, the beloved disciple: *Woman, behold thy son.*

VI. **Darkness over all the Land.** — Ver. 45. For three hours. From the sixth hour: or noon. There was darkness over all the land: not over all the earth, but over the land of Palestine. It could not have been from an eclipse, (1) because it was the time of full moon, when the moon is opposite to the sun; (2) because a total eclipse can at most last but nine minutes. — *P.* It may have been connected with a natural phenomenon, premonitory of the earthquake which followed. Stroud (*Physical Cause of Christ's Death*) gives a number of illustrations of similar phenomena of darkness connected with earthquakes or volcanoes. — *Abbott.* It was a miraculous occurrence designed to exhibit the amazement of nature and of the God of nature, at the wickedness of the crucifixion of him who is the light of the world and the sun of righteousness. — *Schaff.* This darkness was typical of the darkness over Jesus' feelings; of the dark hour of sin and depravity that could crucify God's beloved Son; of the darkness of sin over all the earth which was to be dispelled by the cross of Jesus, and his resurrection from the dead. — *P.* Unto the ninth hour: three o'clock, the time of Jesus' death.

VII. **Closing Scenes.** — Vers. 46-50. About three o'clock, the hour of the evening sacrifice. THE FOURTH WORD FROM THE CROSS. 46. Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? (Ps. 22: 1). These are Hebrew words. Mark gives the same in the Aramaic, or Syriac-Hebrew, then in common use. The sound is very nearly the same. My God, my God: the cry, not of despair, but of extreme anguish, yet of resignation and holy confidence in God as his God. — *G. W. Clark.* Why hast thou forsaken me? or why didst thou forsake me? We have in this exclamation an intensified renewal of the agony of Gethsemane, the culmination of his vicarious sufferings where they turned into victory (*Schaff*), for the forsaking was now near its end.

47. This man calleth for Elias: Elijah. A heartless Jewish witticism. — *Meyer.* This hardly seems possible after the three hours' darkness. — *Clark.* Elias figures in many an ancient Jewish fable, as a rescuer in danger, distress, or calamity. — *Robinson.*

THE FIFTH WORD FROM THE CROSS: *I thirst* (John 19: 28).

48. One of them ran and took a sponge, etc.: in answer to Jesus' cry of thirst. The "vinegar" was the common sour wine. They put the sponge on a reed or stalk of hyssop (John).

49. The rest said, Let be: hold on, wait, to see if Elijah will come at his call.

50. ¹ Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

And Jesus cried again with a so loud voice, and yielded up his spirit.

¹ Mark 15: 37. Luke 23: 46.

THE SIXTH WORD FROM THE CROSS. Immediately after this, Jesus cried, *It is finished* (John 19: 30). What was finished? His life on earth, his life's work, the cup of suffering, the atonement for the sins of the world, the old era and dispensation, the prophecies of Scripture.

THE SEVENTH WORD FROM THE CROSS then followed: *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit* (Luke 23: 46).

50. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice: not a cry of agony, but a shout of triumph. — *Robinson*. Perhaps an inarticulate cry is meant, or perhaps the sixth word from the cross, "It is finished" (John 19: 30). — *Professor Carr*. Before this time the darkness had cleared away. As the sun of nature sheds once more his illuminating beams upon the cross, even so the light of an answering inward joy comes to cheer in death the spirit of our Redeemer. It is not in darkness, but in full, clear, unclouded light that Jesus dies. — *Hanna*. **Yielded up the ghost.** Ghost is Old English for "spirit." His soul. Note how all of the evangelists speak of Christ's death as a departure, a separation of soul and body, and that a voluntary one.

PHYSICAL CAUSE OF CHRIST'S DEATH. The physical cause of his death has been thought by many to have been rupture of the heart. (1) Crucifixion was generally a very lingering death; the victim lived seldom less than twenty-four hours, often three or four days. (2) Usually the victim died of sheer exhaustion; but Christ was not exhausted, as he cried with a loud voice. (3) John records that blood and water flowed from Christ's side when pierced by the spear. This could only occur if the heart had been ruptured, and the blood, before death, had flowed out into the cavity which surrounds the heart. Christ, then, literally *died of a broken heart*, caused by his overwhelming mental agony. This theory draws our thoughts away from the mere bodily tortures which Christ endured, to the mysterious woe that pressed upon him on account of imputed sin. — *Stock*.

ACCOMPANYING SIGNS. *Just after three o'clock* (Matt. 27: 51-54; Mark 15: 38, 39; Luke 23: 45, 47, 48).

(1) As Jesus expired, the great veil of the temple that hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was rent in twain. The veils before the Most Holy Place were 40 cubits (60 feet) long, and 20 (30 feet) wide, of the thickness of the palm of the hand, and wrought in 72 squares, which were joined together; and these veils were so heavy, that, in the exaggerated language of the time, it needed 300 priests to manipulate each. — *Edersheim*. The rending of the veil typified that the veil that shut out the vision of holiness from the hearts of the people had been taken away (2 Cor. 3: 14-16), and the way into the Holy Place, the state of holiness, and the place of holiness, was now opened.

(2) At the same time there was an earthquake of such power as to rend the rocks and open the tombs; showing how nature, the handiwork of the Son of God, sympathized with the mighty struggle that was going on. Graves were opened, and, after the resurrection of Christ, many bodies of saints that slept came forth, as if to accompany the victorious Christ, and prefigure the resurrection of the dead and the moral resurrection of the world.

(3) All these things greatly affected the people, and even the Roman centurion who had charge of the crucifixion, and doubtless prepared men to see that his was no common death, and hence to believe in this resurrection.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

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LESSONS FROM THE CROSS.

1. Ver. 33. The deed transforms the place, as Calvary, the place of execution, has become the centre of the world's history and the world's salvation.

2. Ver. 34. Note the heroism that would not take one drop from the cup of suffering God put to the lips.

3. Ver. 35. The cost of salvation smites all indifference to religion. If Christ was willing to die that we might be saved, what ought not we to do?

4. Christ crucified is the wisdom and power of God for the salvation of men. He is the only solution of the question how God can be just and true, and yet forgive all who repent and believe.

5. THE ATONEMENT on the cross (1) enabled God to offer forgiveness, and yet to honor his law, so that men would be even more careful to keep the law than if they saw the wicked punished. (2) It proves to us that God is ready to forgive. (3) It shows the evil of sin that demands such a cost in order to be saved from it. (4) It shows that we cannot enter heaven unless we are cleansed from sin. (5) It proves the love of God to man. (6) It furnishes every possible motive for turning from sin, touching the heart with love, showing our danger, teaching the law of duty, which dies rather than fail or neglect, giving us hope of forgiveness and life. (7) It shows the value of our souls, to be worth such a price. (8) It shows the value of salvation, and the worth of eternal life in heaven. (9) All this will be in vain, unless we repent and believe.

6. Ver. 36. Those that watch Christ find in him a King, a Redeemer, an Example.

7. Ver. 37. The title on the cross was written in the chief languages of the world, — a prophecy that Jesus is to be a universal king.

8. One of the worst devils that can enter any man is *the mocking devil*. — R. Glover.

9. Ver. 40. The world are forever misinterpreting Christ and his church, perverting their doctrines.

10. Ver. 42. He who seeks first to save himself is never able to save others.

11. People continually think that they would be better in other circumstances than their own; but if they will not serve God where they are, probably they would nowhere.

12. Ver. 45. Light came when Christ was born, darkness when he died. How dark the world would be without Christ!

13. Ver. 46. The greatest of evils would be to be forsaken by God.

14. "There is great consolation in this dying word. Even if God hides his face from us, we need not despair; the sun of grace is still behind the clouds of judgment." — Schaff.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Tenderly and lovingly we can trace out the events in the trial of Jesus on that first Good Friday morning, from the denials of Peter till we see Jesus on the way to Calvary.

SUBJECT, — CHRIST CRUCIFIED FOR US.

I. ON THE WAY TO THE CROSS (vers. 33, 34). With its varied incidents. The location of Calvary. The heroism of Jesus in refusing to drink the stupefying draught.

II. THE CRUCIFIXION (vers. 35, 37, 38). The method, the agony, the superscription, the atonement. Why this suffering was necessary.

Illustration. It is on record that a soldier once said that, of all the awful sounds human ears could be forced to listen to, the most terrible out of hell were those pitiable cries, in the solemn silence of the midnight, from the lonely hill where crucified men were hanging in agonies out of which they could not even die, while a breath to suffer with remained.

Illustration. The familiar story of Zeleucus, king of the Locri, best told and explained in the discourse of Caleb Burge, in Professor Park's book on the atonement. This is the best exposition I have seen of the governmental theory of the atonement.

Illustration. During a plague in Marseilles, the physicians decided that nothing could be done to save the people, unless a victim could be dissected and the nature of the disease learned. But who would do this? Dr. Guyon rose, and said he would do it. He wrote his will, bade his family farewell, entered the hospital, made the dissection and examination, wrote out the results, and in a few hours was dead. But now the physicians could treat the disease, and the plague was stayed. These incidents may help to illustrate the devotion of Christ to death for the world. See also the story of Winkelried, rushing into the ranks of the enemy, gathering a sheaf of spears in his own bosom, and dying, but breaking the line, that his comrades might press through to victory. — C. S. Robinson, in "Sunday-School Times."

Illustration. *The Power of the Cross. The Tale of Colonel Gardiner's Conversion,*—a tale so remarkable that it has remained historic for more than a hundred and fifty years. He was a gay military man, without any virtues to commend him, licentious, profane, and intemperate. One Sabbath evening he had been carousing in company with some roosting comrades; late at night he retired to his chamber. There his eye accidentally lighted upon a book entitled "The Christian Soldier; or, Heaven taken by Storm." He took it up to ridicule it, but fell asleep while it lay in his hand. He dreamed: he thought he saw a prodigious blaze of light shining upon the volume; raising his eyes to know what was so suddenly bright overhead, he saw suspended in the air a vivid representation of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross; distinctly then he heard some one saying, "This I did for thee; what hast thou done for me?" Struck to the very depth of his conscience, he was awakened instantly; at once, filled with contrition, as a sinner he sought peace and found pardon for his soul.—*C. S. Robinson.*

III. SCENES AT THE CROSS (ver. 35-45). The soldiers. The mockers. The watching friends. The robbers; the conversion of one of them. Jesus and his mother. The darkness. The seven words from the cross.

Illustration of the Darkness. It may have been caused by some atmospheric influence. On Sept. 6, 1881, in a great part of New England, the sky was filled all day with smoke, and everything looked as if seen through yellow spectacles, owing to extensive forest fires in Canada and Michigan. I was in Boston on that day, and was told that some people thought the world was coming to an end.—*Schaff.* I remember it well; and although the darkness was only partial, it was one of the most weird and strange scenes I ever witnessed. One of the greatest of modern astronomers, speaking of a total eclipse, says, "The phenomenon, in fact, is one of the most terrible that man can witness, and no degree of partial eclipses gives any idea of its horrors."

IV. IT IS FINISHED (vers. 46-50). The last cry of triumph. The peculiar mode in which all the evangelists speak of Jesus' death. What was finished. The event which accompanied Jesus' death. *Lessons from the Cross.*

LESSON XI. — JUNE 10.

JESUS RISEN. — MATT. 28: 1-15.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.*—1 COR. 15: 20.

TIME.—The resurrection of Jesus was early Sunday morning, April 9, A.D. 30, on the third day after his crucifixion.

PLACE.—From the tomb in the garden near Calvary. Jerusalem and vicinity.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Mark 16: 1-13; Luke 24: 1-12; John 20: 1-18.

EVENTS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CRUCIFIXION.

- (1) The veil of the temple was rent.
- (2) The earthquake, and the rising of saints from the dead (given only by Matthew).
- (3) The centurion at the cross acknowledges that Jesus must be the Son of God.
- (4) The watching of the women.
- (5) The piercing of Jesus with the spear.
- (6) The taking down from the cross.
- (7) The burial.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Burial.—*Friday afternoon, between four and six o'clock, near Calvary* (Matt. 27: 57-61; Mark 15: 42-47; Luke 23: 50-56; John 19: 31-42). The Jews not wishing to have the crucified ones exposed to sight on the next day, which was the great day of the Passover feast, asked Pilate to have their death hastened, and the bodies buried before sunset, when their Sabbath began. Jesus was already dead; but to make sure, the soldiers pierced his side with a spear. Joseph of Arimathea asked permission of Pilate to care for the body of Jesus. He with Nicodemus took the body from the cross, wrapped it in linen clothes, with an hundred weight of spices to preserve the body from decomposition, and laid

1. In the ¹end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene ²and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the

¹ Mark 16: 1. Luke 24: 1. John 20: 1. ² Matt. 27: 56.

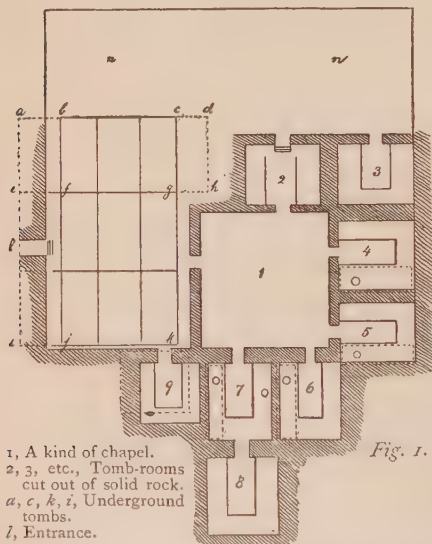
it in a new sepulchre belonging to Joseph, in a garden near by, and rolled a stone against the door. The loving women who had remained near the cross saw where the body was laid, and went home to prepare spices and ointments for the completion of the embalming, and then rested over the Sabbath.

II. **Measures taken to make Sure that Jesus was really Dead.**—*The Sabbath* (Matt. 27: 62-66). It was of the utmost importance, though they knew it not at the time, that the fact of Christ's death should be proved beyond the possibility of cavil or doubt, for otherwise doubt would be thrown upon the fact of his resurrection. Every precaution was taken, not by his disciples, but by the enemies of Jesus. (1) The Roman centurion assured Pilate of the death of Jesus (Mark 15: 44, 45). (2) The soldiers pierced his body with a spear, and from the wound flowed blood and water,—a proof of death. (3) At the request of the chief priests, the stone against the door of the sepulchre was sealed, and a Roman guard placed around the tomb, so that no one could take away the body, and then pretend that he had risen. (4) His friends had no expectation of his rising in the way he did. They expected not his coming back to them in the body, but if at all, "his second coming in glory into his kingdom." (5) The tomb was a new one, in which no one had ever been buried, and so there could be no doubt as to the identity of the body of Christ.

III. **The Resurrection.**—*Very early Sunday morning* (Matt. 28: 2-4). On the third day Jesus rose from the dead. Nothing is known of the manner of it, but we are told that it was accompanied by a great earthquake; and an angel whose countenance was like lightning, and whose raiment was white as snow, came and rolled away the stone from the sepulchre; not to allow Jesus to come forth, of course, but for the sake of those who were coming to view the sepulchre, and to show that the resurrection was an act of divine power.

IV. **The Early Visit of the Women to the Sepulchre.**—Vers. 1-8. *Early Sunday morning, about five o'clock.*

1. In the end of the sabbath: our Saturday. The time designated by this phrase is decisively explained by the words that follow, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week: Sunday. The night following the Sabbath is spoken of as part of the Sabbath, according to common civil reckoning of the day. Came Mary Magdalene: *i.e.*, Mary from Magdala, on the Sea of Galilee, whom Jesus had redeemed from the terrible affliction allied to insanity,—the being possessed by seven demons (Luke 8: 3). She is not the same with "the woman who was a sinner." So far as we know, she was always a pure woman.—There is at Dresden a painting "of the school of Titian," which represents her as a woman of middle age, once very beautiful,



- 1, A kind of chapel.
- 2, 3, etc., Tomb-rooms cut out of solid rock.
- a, c, k, i, Underground tombs.
- l, Entrance.

TOMB ON WEST SIDE OF JEREMIAH'S GROTTTO.

(From drawing by Hon. Selah Merrill.)

ful, with deep lines of suffering in her face, but over it all a look of gentleness, peace, and unutterable gratitude.—*Broadus*. And the other Mary: the mother of James the less and Joses (27: 56), together with Salome the mother of John, Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and other women. To see the sepulchre: from visiting which they had refrained over the Sabbath. They brought spices with them for embalming the body (Luke 24: 1).

2. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the ¹angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3. ²His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*.

sepulchre. And behold, there ²was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and ⁴for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as

¹ Mark 16: 5. Luke 24: 4. John 20: 12. ² Dan. 10: 6.

As they went, they were concerned about the question, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb?" for they knew, from observation of the interment, that it was exceeding great, and a man's strength would be necessary (Mark 16: 3, 4).—*Broadus*. The next verse explains what had taken place. The difficulties in the way of duty are removed for those who go forward to do it.

2. Behold, there was a great earthquake: before the arrival of the women; perhaps they felt it on their way thither. It may have been "a repetition of the shock described in 27: 51 (at the time of our Lord's death), as such are not unusual after an interval, but in this case distinctly stated to be supernatural as to its cause."—*Cook*. For the angel (*an angel*) descended from heaven: a divine messenger, to overawe the guards, and show that Jesus rose, and was not taken from the tomb by human power. Rolled back the stone from the door. The tomb was cut in the side of a rock, like a cave, large enough for several persons to enter. The entrance was protected by a large stone, sometimes round, like a large millstone, rolled in front of the opening. There was often an outer enclosure or room. Sat upon it: in the presence of the guard.

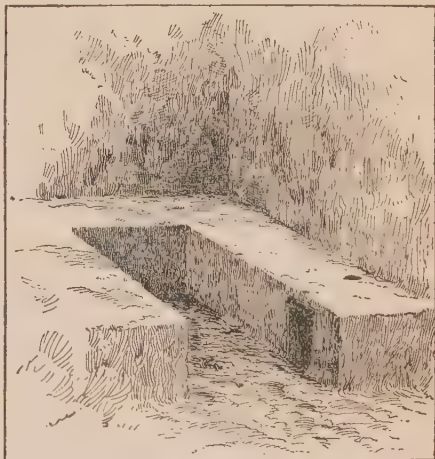
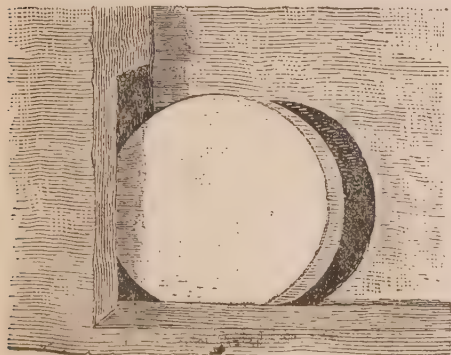


Fig. 2.

ONE OF THE TOMB-ROOMS.

(As 2, 3, 4, etc., in Fig. 1. The bodies are laid on the rock bench.)

(From drawing by Hon. Selah Merrill.)



STONE AT DOOR OF SEPULCHRE.

3. His countenance (*his appearance*) was like lightning: in vivid and intense brightness. And his raiment white as snow. This was heavenly apparel. Christ at his transfiguration had his face shining as the sun, and his raiment white and glistening. This dazzling whiteness was the symbol of joy and purity and glory.—*Jacobus*.

4. And for fear of him the keepers: that is, the Roman guard. Did shake: they *quaked*. The verb used is cognate to the noun that is rendered "earthquake" in the second verse. And became as dead: apparently swooned away with their terror.—*Abbott*.

5. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6. He is not here: for he is risen, ¹as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, ²he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

8. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

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ran to bring his disciples 8

¹ Matt. 12: 40; 16: 21; 17: 23; 20: 19.

² Matt. 26: 32. Mark 16: 7.

5. And the angel answered: to the unspoken fear of the women.—*Abbott.* And said unto the women. Mark says that this address of the angel was as they had entered the sepulchre—the heavenly messenger “*sitting on the right side,*” viz., on the stone, as Matthew records. There was an inner vault where the bodies were laid, and the stone was at the mouth of this, while there was also an *outer* enclosure, into which the women entered, as stated by Mark, and saw the angel sitting, as told by Matthew. (See *cuts* above.) This reconciles the seeming discrepancy. In ver. 8, Matthew intimates, by the Greek term rendered “*departed,*” in old version (or having gone out from), that they had been inside.—*Jacobus.* Fear not ye. Ye is emphatic in the original. The keepers and the enemies of Jesus had reason to fear, but not these disciples. They had infinitely more reason to rejoice than to fear. For I know. He understood them, and had come to help them. He knew that love to the Crucified One had brought them to the tomb.

6. He is not here: in the tomb. For he is risen. This certainly implies that the resurrection had taken place before the arrival of the holy women—probably also before the descent of the angel.—*Cook.* Through woman death was first introduced into the world; to woman the first announcement was made of the resurrection.—*Hilary.* As he said. Luke’s report is fuller (chap. 24: 6, 7). For Christ’s prophecies of his resurrection see Matt. 16: 21; 17: 23.—*Abbott.* Come, see the place. This was a niche in the inner chamber of the tomb. The angel thus convinces them of Christ’s having actually risen.—*Jacobus.*

7. And go quickly, and tell his disciples: that their sorrows may end, their doubts be removed, their night be turned into day. It was fitting that the resurrection should occur at the dawning of the day. It was the dawning of the world’s day of redemption.—*P.* Mark adds and *Peter.* For he would be the saddest of all. This message would be a drop of joy in his cup then, as showing Christ’s forgiveness. It would be a joy that he might have opportunity to ask pardon and show his repentance. No longer need it be true that the last word he ever spoke in the presence of his Lord was a denial that he knew him, accompanied by curses.—*P.* You have *your* work to do for your risen Lord. Neither your amazement nor your joy must keep you from doing that. Do not stop to wonder; do not stop to rejoice. Start off on your mission to your brethren, and wonder and rejoice as you go.—*H. C. Trumbull,* in “*Sunday-School Times.*” And behold he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him. So Jesus himself had promised them before he died (Matt. 26: 32). He did indeed show himself before they went to Galilee, but the great manifestation to over five hundred at once who must have gathered for that purpose on account of the message, the great proof that he was living in his own human body, by eating with the disciples, and the great commission to evangelize the world, all were in Galilee.—*P.* The meaning may possibly be that they were expected to go into Galilee (this was spoken to the apostles only at the last supper), but that *he was to lead the way for them*; they were to remain at Jerusalem until he should give them notice to go into Galilee; and when he should give this notice, they would find him there before their arrival.—*Pres. Woolsey.* Lo, I have told you. I, the angel, announce this promise very clearly and unmistakably.

8. And they departed . . . with fear and great joy. Fear at what they had seen, joy at what they had heard; and both mingled because the latter seemed too good to be true.—*Schaff.* This commingling of very different feelings is a common experience. And did run. In obedience to the angel they used all possible haste.

9. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, ¹Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

10. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: ²go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

word. And behold, Jesus met 9 them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then saith Jesus unto them, 10 Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

¹ Mark 16: 9. John 20: 14. ² John 20: 17. Rom. 8: 29. Heb. 2: 11.

V. Proofs of the Resurrection; from Friends.—Vers. 9, 10. *Forty days, from April 9 to May 18. Appeared eleven times.*

FIRST APPEARANCE OF JESUS AFTER HIS RESURRECTION. *To Mary Magdalene, early Sunday morning* (Mark 16: 9). It is probable that Mary Magdalene went ahead of the others, and drawing near the tomb, saw that the stone was removed, and without waiting to enter concluded that the Jews had stolen the body of Jesus. She immediately hastened back to the disciples to tell them of the loss (John 20: 1, 2). The other women kept on, and entered the sepulchre, as we have seen, and having received the message of the angel, returned to the city. In the meantime, Peter and John, hearing the report of Mary Magdalene, ran to the sepulchre and entered it after the women had departed. Mary returned more slowly to the sepulchre, and reached it soon after Peter and John had returned home. Here, Jesus revealed himself to her (John 20: 10-17).

SECOND APPEARANCE OF JESUS. *To the women, returning to the city. Early Sunday morning.*

9. And as they went to tell his disciples. This phrase is omitted in the best Mss. and in Rev. Ver., but it is implied in the narrative. They were returning to Jerusalem by some other streets than those by which Mary Magdalene and Peter and John had gone. Behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. "Rejoice," the usual form of salutation. The English "all hail" is shortened from "all health." Held him by the feet. Clapsed his feet, in reverent, affectionate joy, to make sure that it was indeed their Lord, and to express their gladness. And worshipped him. Religious worship or adoration is here meant, not mere reverence, though the word often has the latter sense.—*Rev. Com.* The devoted women signified, by their beautifully significant and seemly acts, their deep appreciation of their Lord's *worship*.—*Morison.*

10. Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee. The same message which the angels had given them in the sepulchre (see on ver. 7).

OUR LORD'S APPEARANCES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION.

(1) To Mary Magdalene alone (Mark 16: 9; John 20: 11-18), near Jerusalem, Sunday, April 9, early in the morning.

(2) To the women returning from the sepulchre (Matt. 28: 9, 10), near Jerusalem, Sunday, April 9, early.

(3) To Simon Peter alone (Luke 24: 34), near Jerusalem, Sunday, April 9, early.

(4) To two disciples going to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13), Sunday, April 9, four to six P.M.

(5) To the apostles at Jerusalem, excepting Thomas, who was absent (John 20: 19), Sunday, April 9, evening.

(6) To the apostles at Jerusalem a second time, when Thomas was present (John 20: 26, 29), Sunday, April 16, evening.

(7) At the Sea of Tiberias, when seven disciples were fishing (John 21: 1).

(8) To the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28: 16), and to above 500 brethren at once (1 Cor. 15: 6), in Galilee, probably at the same time, though some make these to be separate appearances, counting eleven in all.

(9) To James only (1 Cor. 15: 7), probably at Jerusalem.

(10) To all the apostles on Mount Olivet, at his ascension (Luke 24: 51), Thursday, May 18.

PROOFS OF THE RESURRECTION. Blot the resurrection out of the story of Christ, and you may as well blot out the Christ himself.—*Dr. Kennedy.* All theories which seek to set the resurrection aside have proven failures. To suppose that the apostles told a lie, as did the Sanhedrim (chap. 28: 13), is a *moral* impossibility; that the resurrection was a mere reviving from a swoon, is a *physical* impossibility; that the appearances were mere visions or ecstasies, is a *psychological* impossibility; such visions are not so often repeated nor to so many persons in different localities. Phantoms, visions, the result of too lively imaginations (!)

11. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

Now while they were going, ¹¹ behold, some of the guard came into the city, and told unto the chief priests all the things that were come to pass.

do not revolutionize the world. To found a church without a resurrection would require a greater miracle than the conversion of Paul or even the resurrection itself. — *Schaff*. I have been used for many years to study the history of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidences of those who have written about them; and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the mind of a fair inquirer, than that Christ died, and rose again from the dead. — *Dr. Arnold*. (1) The apostles had the most absolute faith in the fact, so that they based their hopes and their preaching upon it, and were ready to announce it everywhere. (2) This faith came in direct opposition to their previous beliefs and worldly interests. (3) They had every opportunity for thoroughly satisfying themselves on the point. (4) By their declaration of the fact they induced thousands of the very enemies of Christ to believe in it, and that close to the time and near the very spot on which it occurred. The early church universally believed in it; and it is incredible that a myth, a false story, should have so grown up without substantial foundation. — From *Thomas*' "Genius of the Gospel." (5) They attested this fact not only by their lives, but by their death. (6) Only the fact of the resurrection can account for the marvellous change in the spirit and character of the apostles. The resurrection completely transformed them; inspired them with a new conception of Christ's kingdom as for all people, with a new courage to suffer for the sake of their risen Lord and his kingdom, and with a new purpose to preach Christ and him crucified everywhere as a spiritual redemption for sin (Acts 2: 39; 5: 41; 10: 43). Neither fraud nor fiction is competent to account for the moral contrast. (7) A singular and significant testimony to the truth of the resurrection is afforded by the change in the Sabbath day. It was changed, not by any express command in the New Testament, but by the almost universal consent of the church, which could not endure to observe as a day of joy and gladness that on which Christ lay in the tomb, nor forbear to mark as a weekly festival that on which he arose. — *Abbott*. (8) The very existence of the Christian Church is a proof of the resurrection of Jesus. "Faith in mere visions or phantoms may produce phantoms, but not such a phenomenon as the Christian Church, the greatest fact and the mightiest institution in the history of the world." — *Pres. Woolsey*.

THE BODY OF JESUS DURING THE FORTY DAYS. It is of the utmost importance that we remember that the body Jesus rose with was the very same body which died on the cross. For otherwise it is impossible to prove that Jesus himself actually rose from the dead. Some have thought that Jesus rose with a body like our resurrection bodies, because he seemed to have peculiar power over his body, entered rooms apparently with closed doors, and appeared occasionally and for brief seasons only. But (1) he expressly says that his resurrection body was flesh and blood; Thomas felt of it. Jesus ate common earthly food. While Paul tells us that our resurrection body is to be a spiritual body, and is not flesh and blood. (2) Jesus could have the same power over his earthly body as over his resurrection body, since both were flesh and blood, and he gave hints of this power several times. The Spirit of Jesus always had perfect power over matter. (3) There is no possible way to prove that Jesus arose from the dead, if the body was not precisely the same after that it was before he was buried. (4) Jesus' body was doubtless changed at the ascension into a spiritual body. It was not till that change that we have in the resurrection of Christ a type of the change to be made in our bodies by the resurrection. Then took place what Paul declares is to take place on the resurrection day in those who are alive. We shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. — *P*.

VI. **Proofs of the Resurrection of Jesus; from his Enemies.** — Vers. 11-15. 11. When they were going. While the women were hastening to announce the gospel of the resurrection to the disciples, the soldiers were going to report it to the Pharisees: the one to publish it for the world's redemption, the other to conceal and counteract it. Satan was as quick to silence the Gospel as the disciples to proclaim it. **Some of the watch.** The guard set by Pilate at the request of the chief priests to watch the sepulchre, lest the disciples should steal his body, and say he was risen (Matt. 27: 62-66). **Shewed unto the chief priests.** Under whose charge they were. The beloved of Jesus heard the glorious news from angels, but the enemies from rough Roman soldiers. **All the things that were done.** They told the simple truth as the best possible excuse for their seeming negligence. "How was it to be expected that they should hold out against heaven, or contend with earthquakes and angels?" — *Morison*.

12. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

13. Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

14. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

15. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and rid you of care. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews, and continueth until this day.

12. When they were assembled with the elders. The language does not imply a formal meeting of the Sanhedrim, but rather a secret meeting of the special enemies of Christ. — *Abbott*. They gave large money: an abundant supply. The report the soldiers made was so dangerous to their own lives, that no small sum could induce them to criminate themselves; but the entire results of all their efforts to destroy Jesus seemed to depend upon it.

13. Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. (1) The absurdity and stupidity of this statement is apparent on the face of it. For if the guard were asleep, how could they know that the disciples stole him away. If their testimony is worth anything, it is that while they were asleep they saw men stealing the body, and knew enough to recognize them as the disciples of Jesus. (2) The disciples could not have stolen the body away if they would, with the soldiers placed on watch especially to prevent it. Even the noise of rolling away the stone would have awakened a sleepy guard. (3) The disciples had no motive for stealing the body. They did not expect a resurrection. They did not know its importance. What could they have done with the body to escape detection?

NOTE then (1) It was impossible for these enemies to deny that Christ had by some means left the grave. (2) It was impossible for them to give any other explanation than that which they now invented, — that his disciples stole the body. (3) It was impossible for this, the only explanation they could give, to be credited.

14. And if this come to the governor's ears: who probably soon returned to his capital at Cæsarea. Moreover, the report would be made almost entirely to Jews. We will persuade him: by bribes. Euripides says, "They say that gifts persuade even gods." Pilate to a certain extent was subject to their influence lest they report some of his evil deeds to the emperor at Rome. And secure you: from the penalty of sleeping on guard, which was death.

15. And this saying: the story made up by the soldiers. Until this day. That is, when the Gospel was written, possibly thirty or forty years after the resurrection.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

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LESSONS FROM THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

1. Ver. 1. We have an excellent example of careful regard for keeping the Sabbath, and the reward of those who thus keep it.

2. Ver. 2. How often we say, as we approach a difficult duty, "Who will roll away the stone?" only to find if we go straight on, that God in his own way has removed the obstacles. Often exemplified in the history of modern missions, and of every reform.

3. Angels are ministering spirits to God's children; the other world is close to this, and we have multitudes of defenders there.

4. Ver. 7. Whatever of new truth or experience we have from the Lord we should quickly impart to our brethren.

5. God gives abundant and overwhelming proofs of those great truths which are most essential to our character and happiness and the redemption of the world.

6. The resurrection of Jesus is the crowning proof that he is the Son of God. If he could not conquer death, and come back from heaven, he could not prove that at the first he came from heaven.

7. It is the proof of immortal life beyond the grave; that death does not end all, but the soul lives after the body dies.

8. It is the assurance of our own resurrection, of our recognition of friends on the other side of the grave.

9. It shows that our Saviour has power over every one of our enemies.

10. It teaches the moral resurrection that, being dead to sin, we should be alive unto God.

11. Hence the resurrection was the basis of the preaching of the apostles. "A dead Christ might have been a teacher and a wonder-worker, and remembered and loved as such. But only a risen and living Christ could be the Saviour, the Life, and the Life-Giver, — and as such preached to all men. This is the foundation of the church, the inscription on the banner of her armies, the strength and comfort of every Christian heart, and the grand hope of humanity: '*The Lord is indeed risen.*'" — *Edersheim*.

12. Even bad men are compelled, unwittingly and unconsciously, to bear witness to the truth.

13. As the original Sabbath was the first day of completed Creation, so the Lord's day was the first day of completed Redemption. — *G. W. Clark*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

REVIEW the time and place of Jesus' death.

SHOW that his death was real, and the precautions taken by his enemies at the cross and at the tomb, and by his friends in putting the body in a new tomb, are effective and conclusive proofs against any fraud on the part of the disciples.

SUBJECT, — THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

I. HIS RESURRECTION (vers. 1, 2). The manner. The fact. The promise fulfilled (Matt. 16: 21; 20: 19). The importance (1 Cor. 15: 11-20).

II. THE PROOFS OF HIS RESURRECTION (vers. 1-15). Abundant, sufficient. Eleven appearances, to many hundreds of people, for forty days. Jesus touched by his disciples. He eats in their presence. He ascends before their eyes. His enemies' efforts to cast doubt upon it lead them into absurdity. The proof in the conversion of Paul, and the works of Jesus on the earth ever since. Teach definitely and impress on the memory the eleven appearances.

III. THE TEACHINGS OF THE RESURRECTION. The proof that Jesus was the Son of God. That he is able now to save us. The proof of our own resurrection and immortality, and all the glories that flow from it. A symbol of the moral resurrection (Rom. 6: 1-8).

Illustrations. Hints from nature, — the caterpillar changed to a butterfly, the charcoal and the diamond. The silver cup from the silver ore.

Illustration from Paul. The best of all possible illustrations of the Resurrection is that which Paul gives of a seed buried in the ground springing up into a plant. The little seed becomes a plant radiant with blossoms; the acorn becomes a spreading oak; with new powers and glories inconceivable in the seed.

Illustration from a Watch. The case represents the body, the works the soul. The works can be taken from the old case, and put into a new one, and go on just the same as before. It is really the same watch.

Illustration. Where did all this silk come from — the silk that adorns your person and your homes? In the hollow of a staff a Greek missionary brought from China to Europe the progenitors of those worms that now supply the silk-markets of many nations. The pageantry of bannered host and the luxurious articles of commercial emporium blazing out from the silkworms. And who shall be surprised if out of this insignificant earthly body, this insignificant earthly life, our bodies unfold into something worthy of the coming eternities? — *T. De Witt Talmage*.

Illustration. *Resurrection of the Wicked*. A cruel heathen warrior heard Mr. Moffat, the missionary, preach about the resurrection, and he said to the missionary: "Will my

father rise in the last day?" "Yes," said the missionary. "Will all the dead in battle rise?" said the cruel chieftain. "Yes," said the missionary. "Then," said the warrior, "let me hear no more about the resurrection day. There can be no resurrection; there shall be no resurrection. I have slain thousands in battle. Will they rise?" Ah, there will be more to rise on that day than those want to see whose crimes have never been repented of. But for all others who allowed Christ to be their pardon, and their life, and their resurrection, it will be a day of victory. — *T. De Witt Talmage*.

LESSON XII. — JUNE 17.

THE GREAT COMMISSION. — MATT. 28: 16-20.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.* — Ps. 68: 11.

TIME. — A.D. 30. After April 16, and before May 18. The disciples remained eight days in Jerusalem, till after Sunday eve, April 16; and Jesus ascended forty days after his resurrection, *i.e.*, on May 18. It took some time to give the notice to so many people ("over 500 at once"), for the apostles to go to Galilee, and for the scattered believers to assemble.

PLACE. — On a mountain in Galilee. Some suggest the Horns of Hattin, the Mount of Beatitudes, near the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus delivered his wonderful sermon containing the principles of his kingdom, two years before.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS of the words of Jesus spoken on this occasion, or during the forty days, may be found in Mark 16: 15-20; Luke 24: 36-53; John 21: 1-24; Acts 1: 3-11; 1 Cor. 15: 6.

INTRODUCTION.

Jesus appeared five times to his disciples in Jerusalem on the Sunday he arose from the dead, and once more in Jerusalem on the following Sunday. During this time notice was being given among the disciples scattered through the country, of the great meeting to be held, by the appointment of Jesus, on a mountain in Galilee. While the apostles were waiting for this special appointment, they went fishing on the lake, and Jesus appeared to them there (his seventh appearance, John 21: 1-17). Probably the lesson for to-day occurred not long after this.

16. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain ¹where Jesus had appointed them.

But the eleven disciples ¹⁶went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had

¹ Matt. 26: 32.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Great Meeting of Five Hundred. — Vers. 16, 17. *On a mountain* (Mount of Beatitudes) *in Galilee*. **16. Then:** or, as in Rev. Ver., *but*, in contradistinction from the action of the enemies of Jesus described in the previous verses (*Broadus*); or *at length, by and by* (*Morison*). **The eleven disciples:** Judas having perished by suicide. **Went away into Galilee:** as commanded by the angels (Matt. 28: 7), and by Jesus himself before his death (26: 32) and after his resurrection (28: 10). **Into a mountain:** Rev. Ver., *the mountain*, the designated place. **Had appointed them:** probably when he bade them go to Galilee he named the place; or he may have designated it at some of his appearances after his resurrection.

It is probable that the "five hundred at once" mentioned by St. Paul in 1 Cor. 15: 6, met at this same time. "This supposition (1) accounts for the retired place and formal appointment (the disciples alone he had met several times without any such formal announcement). (2) It also helps to explain why this meeting was to be in Galilee, both because Galilee contained a larger number of pronounced and trustworthy disciples of Jesus than Judea or Perea, and because it was farther from the watchful jealousy of the rulers at

17. And when they saw him, they worshipped him : but some doubted.

18. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying,
¹All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

appointed them. And when 17 they saw him, they worshipped him : but some doubted. And Jesus came to them and 18 spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on

¹ Dan. 7: 13, 14. Matt. 11: 27; 16: 28. Luke 1: 32; 10: 22. John 3: 35. Acts 2: 36. Rom. 14: 9. 1 Cor. 15: 27. Rev. 17: 14.

Jerusalem. (3) This accounts also for the stress laid at the outset on going to Galilee and there seeing him; *there* was to be the great meeting, and the giving of the Great Commission." — *Dr. Broadus*.

THE EIGHTH APPEARANCE. 17. And when they saw him. He appeared to them after they were assembled. They worshipped him: fell prostrate at his feet in reverence and awe. But some doubted: probably not of the eleven, but of the five hundred. The eleven had before this been cured of their doubts. The doubts of the early church could be overcome only by the most invincible proofs. Never were men less credulous; and the fact that they were finally obliged to yield to the many infallible proofs of the risen Christ is strong evidence that he did actually rise from the dead. — *P*. "They doubted, that *we* might never doubt." — *Binney*.

II. The Power and Authority of the Risen Saviour. — Ver. 18. And Jesus came: up to them, near to them — *Carr*. They had hesitated to approach him. And spake unto them, saying. It is utterly arbitrary and unnatural to suppose that these words, together with the words of the two following verses, were all the words which the Saviour spoke, while *talking* to his disciples. We form to ourselves an entirely different view of the scene. The Saviour spoke to them, we doubt not, at length, pouring comfort into their hearts, and darting light into their minds, answering their questions, and meeting their difficulties. We conceive that the evangelist only sums up, in exceedingly compressed epitome, the substance of the Saviour's remarks. — *Morison*. All power is given unto me. The English language contains no adequate equivalent for the word rendered *power* (ἐξουσία). It embraces the ideas of both *power* and *authority* — power coupled with right. — *Abbott*. The Old Ver. gives one of these meanings, and the Rev. Ver. gives the other. The meanings given in Prof. Thayer's new *Greek-English Lexicon* are 1. "Power of choice, . . . leave, or permission." 2. "Physical and mental power; the ability or strength with which one is endued, and which he either possesses or exercises." 3. "The power of authority (influence) and right." 4. "The power of government (generally translated authority)." All these kinds of power and authority Jesus possessed, and it required them all to carry on his work as the Messiah, subduing the world to himself as King of kings. — *P*. Is given unto me: the *power* he possessed, the *authority* was given him. Of the divine works, that of subduing the world to righteousness and God was committed unto the Son; and all the power and authority needful for accomplishing this work was his. His death was the means; the Holy Spirit whom he would send was the instrumentality; all influences were under his control. — *P*. In his state of *κένωσις* (humiliation) his ἐξουσία (power) would, of necessity, come to be limited by the conditions of that human life into which he had descended. With his resurrection however, this limitation was removed, and his ἐξουσία (power) fully and absolutely restored, so that he once more came into complete possession of his premundane glory (which he had in the beginning with the Father). — *Meyer*.

HIS POWER IN HEAVEN. 1. All the power of God himself is pledged, — the power of love, the power of life, the power of control, the power to pardon, the power to plant new graces in the heart, the power of comfort, and aid in every need, in every place, the power of omnipresence and of omniscience. — *P*. 2. For another thing, the services of subordinate intelligences in heaven are guaranteed. Hence, everywhere in the Old Testament and in the New, angels appear as helpers in the work of men's redemption (Heb. 1: 14). — *Robinson*. 3. The power of the Holy Spirit, to convince the world of sin, to convert the soul, to guide into all truth, to fill with heavenly influences, to direct the church. 4. Power over all spiritual influences and motives.

HIS POWER ON EARTH. 1. Over his disciples, to be their Teacher and their Master, the one Head of the church. 2. Over the world, to guide all nations, to direct the course of history, to make even the enemies of his religion aid in its extension. Every movement, every design of man, every worldly force, is under his control. 3. He has the power on earth over all the motives that can move men toward God, — love, duty, fear, hope. 4. He has authority over property. The silver and the gold are his. 5. He has power over nature

19. ¹Go ye therefore, and ²teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost :

earth. Go ye therefore, and ¹⁹make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost:

¹ Mark 16: 15. ² Isa. 52: 10. Luke 24: 47. Acts 2: 38, 39. Rom. 10: 18. Col. 1: 23.

and its laws, so that he can defend and aid his children. 6. He has power over all the inventions of men, so that commerce shall carry his Gospel, telegraphs transmit his word, and cannon batter down barriers to his work. 7. He has power over all adverse influences, devils, wicked men, wrong ideas. — *P.*

III. The Great Commission, (1) To disciple all Nations. Missionary. — Ver. 19. **Go ye therefore:** be aggressive, go forth from place to place, and nation to nation, *because* Jesus has power to protect you and to make your work a success. In obedience to this command the disciples "went everywhere preaching the word." — *P.* See the fitness of his commission: "As I have all power, Go. I have dominion everywhere; go everywhere." — *Bishop Simpson.* The first word in this commission is "Go." Yet that word is often lost sight of by preachers and other Christian workers. There are those who seem to think that this message reads: "Come ye from all the world, and hear the Gospel." Ministers complain that people do not come and hear them preach. Christian workers complain that their godless neighbors are not ready to come and sit under pulpit preaching. Well, what if those who need the Gospel will not come and seek it? How about this word to you — "Go"? Go and preach to those who will not come to hear. Go out after the little ones who never come to Sunday-school. Go and compel, by loving entreaties, those who would be welcome if they came unasked, but who will not come unless you go and bring them. — *H. C. Trumbull.* **And teach:** Rev. Ver. *make disciples of.* *Teach* here is a different word from the *teach* in the next verse. We greatly need an English word *disciple* (all nations) for this passage. The verb *disciple* is found once in Shakespeare (*All's Well*, 1, 2, 28), and once in Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, 14, c. 1. To disciple a person to Christ is to bring him into the relation of pupil to teacher, taking his yoke of authoritative instruction, accepting what is true because he says it, and submitting to his requirements because he makes them. — *Broadus.* **All nations:** not the Jews only, as in their commission when Jesus was on earth (Matt. 10: 5), but all nations and kindreds and tongues, and every person in them (Mark).

THE MISSIONARY DUTY OF THE CHURCH. Observe that this command implies (1) that Christianity is a universal religion, not merely one of the religions of the world; (2) that it is adapted to all nations and all classes (Rom. 1: 16), a claim which history has abundantly justified; (3) that not a natural development, but obedience to the principles inculcated by Jesus Christ, constitutes the secret of true civilization among all nations, and thus that Christian missions are the mother of civilization; (4) that from all nations the members of Christ's church triumphant are to be gathered to God by obedience to this commission (Rom. 10: 11-13). — *Abbott.* The very soul of our religion is missionary, progressive, world-embracing: it would cease to exist if it ceased to be missionary, if it disregarded the parting words of its Founder. — *Max Müller.*

(1) This is the command of Christ. The church cannot be obedient, and let one nation be without the Gospel. The duty is obligatory, not on ministers and missionaries alone, but upon the whole church. This commission was given, not to the apostles only, but to the whole body of five hundred disciples.

(2) This command includes home missions as well as foreign; our own neighborhood as well as more distant places. But missionary effort must not be confined to the home field. Every nation needs the Gospel as much as ours needs it.

(3) It is the nature of a living Christianity to be missionary. Max Müller says that of all religions, only the missionary religions are living. That church is dead which is not anxious to preach the Gospel to every creature.

(4) This is the only way the church will keep pure. Nothing without this can keep the doctrine or life pure: organizations, creeds, persecutions — all have failed. But any church which seeks to save souls will keep pure, because it cannot do its work without the great main doctrines of Christianity.

(5) The true *Broad Church* cares for the salvation of the world; the *Narrow Church* is the one that cares chiefly for itself and for temporal things.

(6) The church at home is built up faster by working for the heathen.

(7) The grandeur of this work exalts the individual Christians who give and labor.

20. ¹Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

teaching them to observe all 20 things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

¹ Acts 2: 42.

(8) It is blessed to have part in the final triumph of the Gospel. — *P.*

Baptizing them: causing them to make a public profession of their discipleship through baptism. This is the duty of every Christian. It is both commanded and necessary; commanded because necessary. It confirms their faith, it separates them from the world, it binds them together in a church, it keeps them from falling away. There are Christians who never publicly professed Christ by joining any church, but I never saw such a Christian who also enjoyed the fulness of the Christian life, nor entered upon a high degree of usefulness. — *P.* In (rather, *into*) the name (the essential nature) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This includes the idea of *by the authority of*, but also *dedicated into communion and fellowship with* the triune God. Baptism is the sign and seal of the new covenant of grace with all its blessings and privileges, as also its duties and responsibilities. The neglect of the latter destroys the claim to the former. — *Rev. Com.* The singular is used, — *name*, not *names*, — pointing to the unity in trinity, and to the equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There is thus a reference to the different parts which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit take in the work of salvation, and to the unity of the Godhead, the fountain of all blessing. — *G. W. Clark.* To this corresponds our threefold relation and obligation to God, as created by the Father, as redeemed by the Son, as sanctified by the Spirit. — *Rev. Com.* The plural would have implied three distinct beings. The singular implies that the three, though in a sense distinct, are yet one. The fact of the trinity is revealed, but the precise mode of its existence is one of the secret and mysterious things of God. — *G. W. Clark.*

IV. The Great Commission, (2) To teach and train. Pastoral. — Ver. 20.

Teaching them. Conversion is only the beginning of the Christian life and the Christian work. Then begins the great work of teaching and training in all the doctrines of Christ, and the varied duties of life. **To observe:** not merely to *do* Christ's commandments, but to *keep watch over them*, as a guard over his prisoner, and this includes attentive study of the instructions of Christ, watching with prayer against temptation to insure obedience to the commands of Christ, and watching for the fulfilment of Christ's prophecies. — *Abbott.* **All things whatsoever I have commanded you.** The doctrines and precepts of Christ, nothing less and nothing more, are the proper subjects of Christian faith and practice. In these, however, are included the Old Testament which he repeatedly confirms, and the further revelations he made to those personally "commanded" by him, including the Apostle Paul. — *Schaff.* And he promised the Holy Spirit to bring all things to their remembrance, and to guide them in the unfolding and application of his teachings (John 14: 26).

THE CHURCH AS A SCHOOL. (1) The first business of the church is to disciple, *i.e.*, to bring men to Christ. (2) The great teacher is Jesus Christ himself. (3) The lessons to be taught are the doctrines and precepts and promises of Christ, the highest themes possible. (4) The lesson books are, first of all, the Bible; then the work of Christ, the experiences of life, the daily duties and business. (5) The term time is the whole of life. — *P.*

THE TEACHER'S WORK. (1) His *theme* is whatsoever Christ has commanded. (2) His *preparation* is in studying and practising those truths and duties. (3) His *authority* is Christ himself; he is to teach, not with his own authority, or the authority of what others have believed, but the authority of Christ. (4) His *object* is to lead his scholars to Christ, and to train them into true, large-hearted, intelligent, devoted servants of Christ, useful for earth and fitted for heaven. (5) His *interest* is to be in the souls of his scholars. Some one has well said that the *scholar's* interest is in new truths, but the *teacher's* interest is in new minds, unfolding the grand old truths to new learners or to those who grow into larger conceptions. — *P.*

THE ENCOURAGEMENTS. **Lo, I am with you alway.** Note, it is *I am*, not *I will be*. Jesus, with his love, with his power, with his wisdom, with his willingness to help; Jesus the Saviour, the Guide, the Inspirer, the King, the Teacher; Jesus the Omniscient, the Omnipresent, the Omnipotent, is with us everywhere, all the days. **Alway:** literally, *all the days*. It is a daily presence which is promised, not a fitful coming and going, but an abiding presence (John 15: 4); a presence, too, in all days, and never, even in the darkest, to be forgotten. But observe that it is both a promise and a warning. He is present to rebuke and

chasten, as well as to guide and guard and inspire (Rev. 3: 19). — *Abbott*. Even unto the end of the world. The word here is *æon*, and not *kosmos*. The latter signifies the world as a material fabric; the former refers more to the *living* world. It here signifies the present human system. — *Whedon*.

In Mark we read the promise of power to work miracles, to cast out devils, and to speak with tongues, and all needed protection from harm. In John is the promise of the Holy Spirit, and of authority to remit sins. In the Acts (1: 4-8) Luke records the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the power the Spirit gives. All needful encouragements and helps were given with the great commission.

V. **The Ascension.** — Mark 16: 19, 20; Luke 24: 50-53; Acts 1: 9-12. At the close of the forty days from the resurrection (May 18), Jesus met his disciples on the Mount of Olives, and leading them to Bethany, he blessed them; and while he blessed them, he was parted from and carried up into heaven, and a cloud received him out of their sight. This proved that he had been really raised from the dead, was a living, not a dead, Saviour, and was indeed the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Rev. John Harris' *The Great Commission*; Max Müller, on *Missions*; Bishop Simpson's *Sermons*, p. 175, "The Great Commission"; Stevenson's *Praying and Working*; Fish's *Primitive Piety Revived*; Professor T. Christlieb's *Protestant Foreign Missions*; Dr. Dorchester's *The World's Progress*; Dr. A. F. Schaffler's *Growth of Christianity*; J. Hamilton's sermon in *Pulpit Eloquence*, on "The Parting Promise and the Present Saviour"; Fitch's *Sermons*, "The Ascension of Jesus"; Prof. Louise M. Hodgkins, *The Three Marys*; Strong's *Our Country*.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. We have a living Saviour, almighty in power, as he is infinite in love.
2. Where Jesus appoints, there will we meet him and be blessed.
3. It is our duty to make disciples of all nations, near and far. The missionary spirit is the spirit of Christianity.
4. Therefore it is also the duty of all to become disciples.
5. It is our duty to baptize those who are believers, in a public profession of religion.
6. Therefore it is the duty of all to be baptized, and publicly profess Christ.
7. It is the duty of Christians to teach all the doctrines and precepts of Jesus, and train all converts in the truths and practice of the words of Jesus.
8. Therefore it is the duty of all converts to be taught to study God's words.
9. All men need the Gospel as much as we do.
10. God — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit — is engaged in the redemption of man, so difficult and so important is the work.
11. Jesus, with all his power and love, is present with each and every disciple. He is a Saviour near at hand.
12. All needful helps are given for the progress of the kingdom of Christ.
13. That church is most successful which is most earnest in both discipling and teaching all nations.
14. Christian devotion to the command of Christ, and the work of saving and teaching the world, is the one sure safeguard against dangerous errors of doctrine and practice.
15. The success of the Gospel in all lands, its proved adaptability to all ages and all nations, is one of the great and increasing proofs that it is divine.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

THE CONNECTION of this lesson with the last should be through a REVIEW of the Ten Appearances of Jesus, and showing where this lesson belongs. The younger scholars should locate the two regions, Jerusalem and Galilee, on the map.

SUBJECT, — THE GREAT COMMISSION.

I. THE GREAT MEETING (vers. 16, 17). This, the great meeting, during the forty days, including the apostles and 500 disciples. Final instruction. Worship of Christ. Doubts of these men leading to our certainties.

II. THE GREAT COMMISSION. MISSIONARY (vers. 18, 19). Explain the passage. The grandeur of the idea. The nobleness of the work. Where our missionary work lies — home

and abroad. What each of us can do. Objections to foreign missions. What has been already done. Necessity of obeying this command, to the growth and purity of the church and of the individual Christian. The duty of baptism. The value to a young convert of a public profession of religion.

Illustrations. (1) Real light always shines, and the brighter the light, the farther it shines. (2) Flowing, moving water is pure. Stagnant water becomes impure. (3) The spinning top stands; stop its spinning, and it falls.

Illustration. The very soul of our religion is missionary, progressive, world-embracing; it would cease to exist if it ceased to be missionary, if it disregarded the parting words of its Founder, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," etc. The spirit of truth is the life-spring of all religion; and where it exists, it must manifest itself, it must plead, it must persuade, it must convince and convert. There may be times when silence is gold, and speech silver; but there are times, also, when silence is death, and speech is life, — the very life of Pentecost. Look at the religions in which the missionary spirit has been at work, and compare them with those in which any attempt to convince others by argument, to save souls, to bear witness to the truth, is treated with pity or scorn. *The former are alive; the latter are dying or dead.* — *Max Müller.*

Illustration. Archdeacon Farrar says that "he who talks of missions as a failure, uses the language of ignorant error as an excuse for unchristian sloth." We are apt to know the work of our own denomination only; but read Dr. Christlieb on *Foreign Missions*, and the *World's Progress*, by Dr. Dorchester, and we shall begin to understand the marvellous extent of missionary work, and the conquering progress of the Gospel. In this country alone there were raised

		For Foreign Missions.	For Home Missions.
In the thirty years	1820 to 1850	\$8,666,600	\$5,382,000
In the next thirty years	1850 to 1880	43,007,000	45,331,700
At the end of the first 1000 years from the birth of Christ there were 50,000,000 in Christian lands.			
In the next 500 years the number was doubled, and there were 100,000,000 in 1500 A.D.			
This number was doubled in the next 300 years, and there were 200,000,000 in 1800 A.D.			
This number was again doubled in the next 80 years, and there are 415,000,000 in 1880 A.D.			
And the progress is growing more and more rapid.			

III. THE GREAT COMMISSION. TEACHING (ver. 20). The duty and privilege of teaching and of being taught. What to teach. Where to learn it. The great encouragements from the presence of Jesus.

IV. THE ASCENSION and its lessons. What Jesus is now doing in heaven for us, — a living, guiding, loving, omnipotent Saviour.

LESSON XIII. — JUNE 24.

REVIEW AND TEMPERANCE. — 1 COR. 8: 1-13.

REVIEW.

We have now been for a year studying the Life of Christ, as recorded in Matthew. It will be well, therefore, to take, as it were, a bird's-eye view of the life of Christ, and impress upon the scholars the main incidents of his life, leaving a picture which never can be effaced. Below is given a series of questions, showing one way in which this general view of Christ's life may be set forth.

SUBJECT, — THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

I. HIS BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE. When and where was Jesus born? His mother's name? Give three incidents of his early life. In what place did he live? for how many years? What was his occupation? When and where was he baptized?

II. THE TIME AND PLACE OF HIS MINISTRY. How old was Jesus when he began his public ministry? How long did it last? In what two countries was most of it spent? What other countries did he visit? Name the chief cities in which he taught. Name two mountains, a lake, and a river connected with his life.

III. HIS TEACHINGS. What sermon of Jesus is recorded? In what way did he do much of his teaching? Name some of the principal parables he spoke. Give some of his illustrations. What were some of the leading truths he taught?

IV. HIS MIRACLES. Name some of the principal miracles. What was the purpose of the miracles? Over what evils and enemies of men did they show our Saviour's power? Were they all miracles of help and blessing?

V. INCIDENTS REVEALING HIS CHARACTER. How did he gain the victory over temptation? What did his example teach about the Sabbath? What was revealed concerning him on the Mount of Transfiguration? What by his night of prayer? by his washing the disciples' feet? by his agony in the garden? by his words upon the cross?

VI. THE ATONEMENT ON THE CROSS. By whom was Jesus betrayed? where? By whom was he condemned? On what occasions was he mocked? Where was he crucified? How many times did he speak on the cross? How long did the crucifixion last? What happened at its close? Where was Jesus buried?

VII. HIS RESURRECTION. How long was Jesus in the tomb? When did he rise? Who saw him first? How many times did he appear? For how long? What was his last message to the church? What was his last act on earth? When did he ascend to God?

TEMPERANCE LESSON. — I COR. 8: 1-13.

1. Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

2. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

3. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

4. As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that *there is* none other God but one.

5. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)

6. But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

7. Howbeit *there is* not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the

idol unto this hour eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

8. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

9. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

10. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;

11. And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

12. But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

13. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Wherefore, if meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh forever more, that I make not my brother to stumble.* — I COR. 8: 13 (Rev. Ver.).

TIME. — The first Epistle to the Corinthians was written about A.D. 57.

PLACE. — From Ephesus in Asia Minor to the church in Corinth, Greece.

AUTHOR. — The apostle Paul, who had lived and preached among them.

CIRCUMSTANCES. — This Epistle was written to correct certain disorders which had arisen in the church since Paul's departure. The Christians in the city were surrounded by idolatry, whose influences pervaded society. When sacrifices were offered to idols, parts of the animals were burned upon the altar, a portion was given to the priests, and a portion was retained by those who made the offering. These remnants, if they were not eaten at the feasts, were often sold in the public markets. Thus a Christian might eat unconsciously of meat that had been offered to idols if he purchased his meat in the market. Or if he attended the social feasts or weddings of his heathen neighbors, he would be liable to eat meat offered to idols, as sacrifices were always offered on such occasions, and a large portion of meat used would be such as had been used in the sacrifices.

THE QUESTION, therefore, which troubled many Christians was whether it was right to eat such meat. Would not those who ate endorse idolatry?

THE ANSWER of Paul was, that what the heathen did with their meat was nothing to the Christians. An idol was nothing, and offering it to idols did not harm the meat. Only they must not eat it *as* an offering, when they were told it was a part of the sacrifice.

A GREAT PRINCIPLE. But Paul said, if his eating meat thus, while it did not trouble his own conscience, should yet lead his brother into idolatry, he would not eat meat as long as the world stood.

A FOUNDATION STONE OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

The principle laid down by Paul is one of the two great foundation stones of the *Temperance Reform*. We will not drink wine or strong drink, even though we believe them to be harmless to ourselves (which they are not), because of our neighbor. As Mr. Gough says, the Bible surely permits us to abstain from wine, and we should do it, if by our indulging our weak neighbor perish.

I. THE MOLOCH OF STRONG DRINK. Moloch was a horrible idol of the Ammonites and Canaanites. It was made of brass, and placed on a brazen throne; the head was that of a calf with a crown upon it. The throne and image were made hollow, and a furious fire was kindled within it; and when the arms were red hot, children were thrown upon them and burned to death, while the cries of the victims were drowned with drums.

INTEMPERANCE is such a horrible idol, with more victims and more worshippers than ever Moloch had.

II. THE VICTIMS are the multitudes of men, women, and children who are ruined by strong drink. Sixty thousand perish on its altars every year, dying a drunkard's death. Ten times as many suffer from its influences. Men sacrifice their wives and children; they sacrifice happiness, home, usefulness, manhood, respectability, character, prosperity, hope, of heaven on the altar of this idol.

III. THE WORSHIPPERS are numbered by the million. All who sell the poison, or aid the traffic, by letting buildings for its sale, for the sake of personal gain, are among the worshippers. All who yield to their appetites, and drink to the injury of themselves or others, are worshippers.

IV. THE COST OF THE WORSHIP. It costs all that the victims lose. But in addition to this the cost of this worship in these United States is \$600,000,000 each year.

It makes nearly 800,000 public paupers, costing yearly \$100,000,000; 300,000 rioters, thieves, murderers, and criminals are recruited from the dram-shop. It takes away the productive labor of 545,000 men engaged in the traffic, and causes a loss of time and industry on the part of drinkers estimated at \$296,000,000, and wastes 40,000,000 bushels of grain.

"Last year," says the *Washington Post*, "the United States drank no less than 642,000,000 gallons of beer, nearly 11 gallons to each inhabitant—men, women, and children. Of whiskey we drank 1¼ gallons apiece. The beer, whiskey, and tobacco cost us, as a people, about \$900,000,000. The workingmen alone paid out more than \$600,000,000 for whiskey, beer, and tobacco."

V. DESTROY THE IDOL BY TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

(1) *Drinking injures ourselves.* Therefore totally abstain, and sign the pledge.

(2) *Drinking causes our brother to stumble.* Our example misleads him, our influence opens the door to his destruction. Even if we could safely drink ourselves, we must abstain for the sake of those who cannot.

(3) *Destroy the Saloon,* and all those things which are continually tempting the young. "They need temptation to make them strong." Do they? Well, they will find a great abundance of temptation everywhere, without having good people, old people, city, and town thrust them into temptation. A perpetual atmosphere of evil is not good for any one, especially for the young and untried.

ILLUSTRATION.

THE OLD DECANTER.

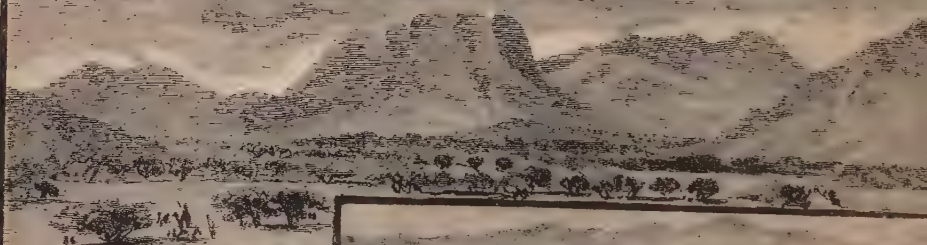
There was an old decanter,
and its mouth was gaping
wide; the rosy wine had
ebbed away and left its
crystal side; and the
wind went humming,
humming, up and down
the sides it flew, and
through its reed-like hollow
neck the wildest notes
it blew. I placed it in
the window where the
blast was blowing free, and
fancied that its pale
mouth sang the queer-
est strains to me. "They
tell me—puny conquerors!
the Plague has slain his ten,
and War his hundred thou-
sand of the very best of men;
but I,"—'twas thus the bottle spake
—"but I have conquered more than all
your famous conquerors so feared and famed of
yore. Then come, ye youths and maidens all, com-
drink from out my cup, the beverage that dulls the
brains and burns the spirits up; that puts to shame
your conquerors that slay their scores below, for
this has deluged millions with the lava tide of
woe. Though in the path of battle dark-
est waves of blood may roll; yet while
I killed the body, I have damned
the very soul. The cholera,
the plagues, the sword, such
ruin never wrought as I, in mirth or
malice, on the innocent have brought.
And still I breathe upon them, and they
shrink before my breath; and year by year my
thousands tread the dismal road of DEATH."



RAMESSES II



EGYPTIAN CHARIOT

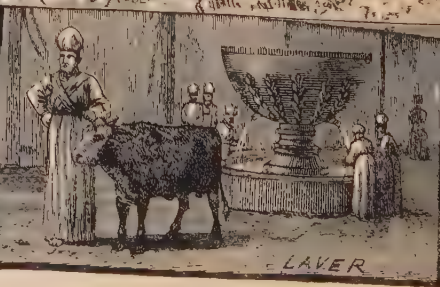


THE MOUNTAINS OF SINAI

BRAZEN ALTAR
& HIGH PRIEST



THE TABERNACLE



LAVER

THIRD QUARTER.

From July 1 to September 30, 1888.

Studies in the Old Testament (Exodus to Deuteronomy).

LESSON I.—JULY 1.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL.—EXODUS 24: 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.*—HEB. 8: 10.

THE BOOK OF EXODUS.—(1) *The Title.* *Exodus* means “the going out,” “the departure.” The book is so named because the departure of Israel from Egypt is the leading event recorded in it. (2) *Authorship.* Moses was probably the author. This is distinctly asserted by Moses himself (Ex. 24: 4), as well as by our Lord (Mark 12: 26; Luke 20: 37). Besides, the thorough knowledge it exhibits of the institutions and usages of the ancient Egyptians, and the minute geographical details of the journey to Sinai, establish in the clearest manner that it was written by an eye-witness. Without doubt there were several revisions or recensions, one of them probably by Ezra, just as we have had several new translations of the Bible, substituting modern words for those whose meanings were obscure by reason of their antiquity. (3) *Date.* It was composed probably during the latter part of the wanderings in the wilderness; that is, between 1491 and 1451 B.C.

TIME OF THIS LESSON.—May, 1491 B.C. (according to the chronology of Archbishop Ussher on the margin of our Bibles, which it is as well to follow). It must have been soon after the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai, which took place just fifty days after the first Passover, when the children of Israel started from Egypt for Canaan.

PLACE.—The plain or valley of Er Rahah, in front of Mt. Sinai, in the southern part of the peninsula of Arabia. This plain includes fully 400 acres, and slopes toward that peak of Sinai called Ras Sufsâfeh, which rises 6830 feet above the sea level, and 2900 feet in a precipitous cliff above the plain.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.—Probably Menephtah, son of Rameses II. (Sesostris), was king of Egypt. Cecrops founded Athens B.C. 1556. The city of Troy was founded B.C. 1480.

THE NUMBER of the Israelites is computed at some two millions in all, from the fact that there were 600,000 grown men (Numb. 1: 46) at this time.

PRONUNCIATIONS.—A'arōn (ā'rōn). Abi'hū; Cā'nāan (kā'nān); Er Rā'hāh; Mēnēph'tāh; Nā'dāb; Rām'esēs; Rās Sūfsā'fēh; Sī'nāi (sī'nā) or Sī'nāi.

INTRODUCTION.

One year ago, when we concluded for a time our Old Testament studies, we were with the Israelites before Sinai, when God, amid darkness and fearful thunders and lightnings, spoke the ten commandments from the mountain. At the same time God gave the Israelites the Book of the Covenant, and directly after that came the ratification of the Covenant as described in the lesson for to-day.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Book of the Covenant. Beginning with Exodus 20: 22 and continuing through the three following chapters (21-23), we have “a series of laws delivered by God to

1. And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, ¹Nadab, and Abihu, ²and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off.

2. And Moses ³alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.

¹ Ex. 28: 1. Lev. 10: 1, 2. ² Ex. 1: 5. Num. 11: 16. ³ Ex. 24: 13, 15, 18.

Moses immediately after the delivery of the Decalogue. This intermediate revelation appears to have been at once committed to writing, and in its written shape was known as the Book of the Covenant (chap. 24: 7), and regarded with special veneration. Altogether, the enactments contained in the short space of three chapters are some seventy; and the Book of the Covenant is thus no mere tentative sketch, but a very wonderful condensation of the essence of all the more important matters which Moses afterwards put forth by divine inspiration in the long space of nearly forty years."—*Geo. Rawlinson*.

The Book of the Covenant appears to have been a practical application to daily life, for legal and governmental purposes, of the great moral principles of the ten commandments. For (1) it is not possible to put into legal form, to be enforced by judges and courts, the highest ethical principles in their fulness, for the government of imperfect and untrained people. The moral law was for their own consciences, for their training before God, for the guidance of their own conduct. The governmental laws were against crimes and injuries to others. Thus we find that in no country even now are the laws a complete and high expression of moral principles, but only of the application of these to conduct in the relation of men to one another. This simple principle will remove many moral difficulties in regard to the divine legislation of Moses. (2) The Israelites for a long time had been untrained and uninstructed, as slaves in Egypt, and they needed to be taught the application of the ten commandments to daily life. (3) They were a large body of people, but not a nation. They had no laws and no government; and they needed a brief, easily comprehended body of laws for their government while a complete code of laws was being formed and applied. (4) This body of laws would bind them to God as their God, and test their spirit of obedience, and aid in training them to be the people of God.—*P*.

II. **A Covenant made between God and his People.**—Vers. 1-8. 1. **And he (God) said unto Moses.** Vers. 1 and 2 probably belong in order of time, immediately after chap. 20: 21, where the *Book of the Covenant* begins, which book is inserted between the giving of the Law (chap. 20: 1-21) and the ratification of the Covenant (chap. 24: 3-8). It is practically as if it read "And God had said to Moses," when the people were affrighted at the terrible scenes amid which the ten commandments were given, and wished that God would not speak to them, lest they die. Therefore God made another arrangement, and had only leading representatives of the people go near where God revealed himself. The *command* is given here in these two verses, but the *obedience* to the command is recorded at ver. 9. This direction was given to Moses in the mount, where he had received the Book of the Covenants after which he went down to the people (ver. 3) to ratify the Covenant. **Come up unto the Lord:** upon Mt. Sinai. **Aaron:** Moses' older brother, afterwards made the first high-priest of the nation. **Nadab and Abihu:** were the two eldest of Aaron's sons, and so his natural successors in the priesthood, had they not sinned by offering "strange fire" (Lev. 10: 1, 2).—*Pulpit Com.* **And seventy of the elders of Israel:** of the older men of the tribes, who were the heads of families, or otherwise recognized as leading influential men, the natural chiefs and leaders. "The *official* elders mentioned (Num. 11: 16) were not yet appointed." These seventy, with Nadab and Abihu, would give a representation of six from each of the twelve tribes. **And worship ye afar off.** Referring to those just mentioned. They were to ascend the mountain only to a certain height.

2. **And Moses alone shall come near the Lord.** As the most fitted to endure the wondrous presence and to receive the communications from God. The majesty of God, his holiness, the value of the communications, their importance, were all impressed upon the people by this arrangement. **But they.** Aaron, his sons, and the seventy elders. **Shall not come nigh.** Though nearer than the people. **Neither shall the people go up with him.** According to their own request (20: 18-21). It appears that while the body of the people stood at the foot of the mountain, Aaron and his two sons and the seventy elders went up probably about half way, and Moses, being privileged with nearer access, went alone quite to the summit and entered the bright and fiery cloud which rested upon it.—*Bush*.

3. And Moses came and told the people ¹all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said ^a will we do.

4. And Moses ²wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill,^b and twelve ³pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

5. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD.

6. And Moses ⁴took half of the blood, and put *it* in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

7. And he ⁵took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said ^a will we do, and be obedient.

Rev. Ver.: *a.* spoken; *b.* mount. ¹ Ex. 19:8. Deut. 5:27. Gal. 3:19, 20. ² Deut. 31:9.
³ Gen. 28:18; 31:45. ⁴ Heb. 9:18. ⁵ Heb. 9:19.

THE COVENANT. 3. And Moses came: from receiving the communications from God on the mount. And told the people all the words of the Lord. The foregoing laws and the ten commandments, together with the promises of special blessings in the event of their obedience. — *J., F. and B.* And all the judgments: laws, statutes, by which to judge what is right. This was in fact proposing to them the terms of a *national covenant*, which was to be ratified with very solemn ceremonies, and enforced with solemn sanctions. — *Bush.* And all the people answered with one voice. Unanimously. All the words . . . will we do. They accepted these as their laws, and God as their law-giver, ruler, and God. Thus was the Nation of Israel begun by a covenant. God gives them laws, and promises them his care, guidance, and protection on condition of obedience. They promise to obey, and to accept God as their God, with supreme authority over them.

Thus still there is a covenant between God and man. God sends his Son and gives his laws and promises, and all who accept of his Son, agreeing from the heart to love him, trust him, and obey him, become God's people, and are under his special care and protection, and begin a new life.

4. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord: that there might be no mistake, and that it might be transmitted to posterity. — *Bush.*

THE COVENANT RATIFIED. And builded an altar under the hill: or mountain, that is, of Sinai. The altar as a representative of God, as the first and principal party to this covenant; and the twelve pillars as the representatives of the twelve tribes of the people as the other party. The Septuagint calls them stones, as if each of the pillars consisted of a single stone, which we incline to believe was the fact; but it is not certain; they may have consisted of heaps of stones. — *Bush.*

5. And he sent young men: because the Levitical priesthood had not yet been instituted. Which offered burnt offerings . . . peace offerings. The *Burnt* offerings were wholly consumed on the altar. The *Peace* offerings were partly consumed by fire and partly eaten by the priests and the offerer. Burnt offerings were at once expiatory and signs of self-dedication. Peace offerings were indications of man's gratitude for mercies received. Both were now offered together, to mark (1) Israel's thankfulness for being taken into covenant, and (2) Israel's determination to consecrate itself wholly to the service of God. — *Rawlinson.* These, of course, were typical of that one great offering of the Son of God, afterwards to be presented, which has forever abrogated all others. By this, peace was made between God and his sincere worshippers, who bring that sacrifice in faith, and lay it on his altar. The people were thus taught the need of a sacrifice. — *Bush.*

6. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins: for the purpose mentioned in ver. 8. And half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar: the representative of God, thereby denoting that he, on his part, engaged to be faithful in the covenant relation which he now condescended to assume, performing all the promises and conferring all the blessings which their corresponding fidelity would entitle them to expect. — *Bush.* The writer of Hebrews (9:19) says that Moses sprinkled blood on the book also; thus blood-staining the record of the Covenant, according to the custom in the East to-day. — *H. C. Trumbull.*

7. And he took the book of the covenant: the one Moses had read to them, and

8. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, Behold the ¹ blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

9. Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel;

10. And they ² saw the God of Israel: and *there was* under his feet as it were a paved work of a ³ sapphire stone, and as it were the ⁴ body ^d of heaven in *his* clearness.

Rev. Ver.: c. omit a; d. the very heaven for clearness.

¹ Heb. 9: 20; 13: 20. ² 1 Pet. 1: 2. ³ Gen.

32: 30. Ex. 3: 6. Judg. 13: 22. John 1: 18. 1 Tim. 6: 16. 1 John 4: 12. ⁴ Rev. 4: 3. ⁵ Matt. 17: 2.

written out for them (see above). And they said. Thus the Book of the Covenant was twice read to them, and twice they solemnly agreed to obey these commands of God. It was really taking an *oath of allegiance to God*.

8. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people. Not certainly upon all the people, who numbered above two millions, but upon their leaders and representatives, the "elders" and other chief men, drawn up at the head of each tribe, and thus brought within his reach. — *Pulpit Com.* This was the acceptance of the Covenant on the part of the people. The import of the act was solemn and awful in the extreme, and the form of adjuration is supposed to have been substantially the following: "As the body of this victim is cloven asunder, as the blood of this animal is poured out, so let my body be divided and my blood shed, if I prove unfaithful and perfidious." — *Bush*. Concerning all these words (Rev. Ver. margin): upon all these conditions.

THE BLOOD COVENANT. The origin of bloody sacrifices is full of mystery, but there are certain hints in Dr. Trumbull's *The Blood Covenant* which throw light upon the subject. (1) The blood was regarded as the very life, the inner personality. (2) It was regarded as a means of infusing life into another by infusing the blood of a healthy person into one who was sick. Modern science shows that this was not without foundation. (3) The mutual transfusion of blood from one person to another by tasting each other's blood made them blood relations of the most intimate kind. They were one evermore. (4) The blood of sacrifices was regarded as a substitute for their own blood.

In the case before us in this lesson, we may therefore see (1) the devotion of the life to God. (2) The receiving of life from God. (3) A mutual and everlasting compact and union of God with his people. (4) There is also the idea of atonement by the blood, *i.e.*, by the life, which can be given only by the death of the victim, and thus points to the atonement of Christ. (5) There is in addition to these the oath of imprecation, as we have seen, where whosoever breaks the vow invokes his own destruction like that of the animal sacrificed. (6) In the sacrifice is a representation of dedicating the most precious things we have, even all we have, to God, as the life-blood is the most precious thing any living being has. (7) On the completion of the Covenant the people have access to God through their representatives, as we see in the verses which follow.

III. The Covenant followed by the Vision of God. — Vers. 9-11. WHO SAW THE VISION. 9. Then went up: into Mt. Sinai, as described in vers. 1 and 2 of this lesson. They went up to a certain point on the mountain side. Moses, and Aaron, etc.: 74 persons in all. The object of the ascent was twofold. (1) A sacrificial meal always followed upon a sacrifice; and the elders might naturally desire to partake of it as near the divine presence as should be permitted them. This was their purpose in ascending. (2) God desired to impress them with a sense of his awful majesty and beauty, and was prepared for this end to manifest himself to them in some strange and wonderful way as they were engaged in the solemn meal (ver. 11). This was his purpose in inviting their presence. — *Pulpit Com.*

They got this glorious sight, not because they deserved it more than others, but because they needed it more. — *D. Young*. They needed it to strengthen their own faith; to enlarge their minds and their knowledge of God; to enable them to realize how great and glorious a God they had promised to serve and obey, and who would also guide them to the promised land. Thus they would be fitted to be the true leaders of the people. — *P.* Doubtless it was intended that they should go down again among the people and be witnesses as to what they had seen. Would it not give an elder greater influence in after days if the people took knowledge of him that he had been with Moses in the mount? — *Young*.

THE VISION OF GOD. 10. And they saw the God of Israel. As to what shape and

11. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he ¹laid not his hand: also ²they saw God, and did ³eat and drink.

12. And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee ⁴tables of stone, and a law, and ⁵commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.

Rev. Ver.: *e.* and they beheld God; *g.* add the. ¹ Ex. 19: 21. ² Gen. 16: 13. Deut. 4: 33.
³ 1 Cor. 10: 18. ⁴ Ex. 31: 18. Deut. 5: 22.

form were seen nothing is said; and even concerning the circumstances nothing more is ventured than an indication of the sapphire work on which he stood. And since we find this reticence of description, it behooves us to put corresponding restraint on our conjectures. — *Young*. It may be sufficient to say that this was a most resplendent display of the divine glory in that form in which the Shekinah usually appeared, — the pillar of cloud and of fire; for it seems clear that its usual aspect was that of an exceedingly bright and dazzling effulgence, increasing on some occasions to the intensity of a glowing and devouring flame. It must have been this *sensible manifestation* of the Deity which we have endeavored to prove to be uniformly the Old Testament adumbration of Christ. It is unquestionably the same object as that mentioned by Isa. 6: 1, and as that described in the vision of Ezek. 43: 1, 2. And under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone: “pellucid sapphire, blue as the blue of heaven.” — *Rawlinson*. Sapphire is of various colors, — blue, red, yellow, and white. A paved work of sapphire is descriptive of a scene of matchless splendor, having the qualities of adamantine solidity, transparency, and brilliancy. — *Murphy*. And as it were the body of heaven: the substance of heaven; the heaven itself for clearness. Nothing less than the spotless purity and lustre of the skies above is fit to be compared with the inexpressible beauty and grandeur of that which was beneath the feet of the God of Israel. — *Murphy*.

11. And upon the nobles . . . he laid not his hands: evidently denoting the select and favored persons above mentioned, as if the splendor of the divine presence *ennobled* everything that came within its sphere. By the “hand” of Jehovah’s “not being laid upon them” is doubtless meant that they receive no harm from this amazing manifestation. — *Bush*. Also they saw God. The original word for “saw” here is a different word from that translated “saw” in the previous verse, as if that were intended to refer to the mere *outward, ocular, and superficial* view of the object as at first beheld. Here, on the other hand, the verb is a term applied for the most part to *prophetic vision*, or that kind of inward and spiritual perception which was enjoyed by holy and inspired men when in a state of supernatural trance or ecstasy. — *Bush*. And did eat and drink: while they saw God. 1. This indicates that they were received into communion and friendship with God. It is impossible to doubt that we have here a precious forecast of the Christian’s highest privilege, — the realization of the presence of God in the sacred feast of the Holy Communion. — *Rawlinson*. They had this freedom before him. Their eating and drinking was symbolical of the privilege of every pious Israelite, sheltered from his sin in God’s mercy, and taking confidence from his word of grace. Much more is it symbolic of the privilege of Christians, in whom perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4: 18). — *Young*. 2. The idea suggested was that of a God *at peace* with Israel, reconciled. The vision would be read in its contrast with the previous revelation. The terrors of the law-giving were now laid aside; all is sweetness, beauty, mildness, serenity, love. This vision of God as a God *at peace* with Israel is mediated by the offering of sacrifice. — *Young*. 3. It was prefigurative of future blessedness. The goal of the kingdom of God is the feast of perfected bliss in glory, where the saints shall eat and drink and see God with no intervening veils, and in the full beauty of his love and holiness. — *Young*. 4. Who is not struck by the juxtaposition of things apparently so remote from each other in their own nature, as witnessing a vision of God and satisfying the gross appetites of physical man? But suppose the incident to be a typical intimation of the fact that eating and drinking, — that is, *enjoying the conditions of our present humanity*, — are not in themselves inconsistent with the visible indwelling of the Most High on earth which we are taught to expect, and do we not find a sufficient explanation of the mystery? — *Bush*.

IV. The Written Law. — Ver. 12. Come up to me. After the sacrificial meal, the 74 persons engaged in it had descended into the plain of Er Rahah, and possibly spent some time there, before a second summons came to Moses. — *Rawlinson*. Moses, of course, obeyed; but before ascending, arranged with the elders that in his absence Aaron and Hur

should have the direction of affairs, and decide all doubtful questions (ver. 14). He then went up the mountain, accompanied for part of the way by Joshua, who is now spoken of as his "minister," or "attendant" (ver. 13). Joshua probably remained with him for six days, while Moses waited for a summons to enter the cloud. On the seventh day the summons came; and Moses, leaving Joshua, entered the cloud, and was hid from the sight of all men. — *Pulpit Com.* **And be there:** abide there. He remained in the mount for forty days, receiving instructions from God. **I will give thee tables of stone.** The ten commandments, which had already been spoken, were to be given in a permanent form. Inscribed on stone, for greater durability, by the hand of God himself, they were thus authenticated and honored above the judicial or ceremonial parts of the law. — *J., F. and B.* **And a law and commandments.** It is probable that the ten commandments alone are spoken of, and that the meaning is, *the tables of stone with the law, even the commandment.* — *Student's Com.* **Which I have written.** These words were not only spoken by the voice, but written by the finger, of God, who herein displays a wondrous care of his chosen people. — *Murphy.* The people needed the written law, in order to help them keep the covenant they had made with God. The written law would be exact, would be permanent, could be consulted, would have peculiar authority. During the forty days on the mount, Moses received the political and the religious laws which were to form the people into a nation, and guide them to a successful and prosperous future.

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHTS ON OLD TESTAMENT THEMES.

THE NEW COVENANT (Heb. 8:6-13; 10:16; Rom. 11:26, 27). The old covenant confirmed by blood (Heb. 9:19-22); but the new covenant by the blood of Jesus Christ (Heb. 9:11-15), purging "your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." The power of the new covenant (Heb. 13:20, 21), "to make perfect in every good work to do his will." Our personal covenant with God (Rom. 12:1, 2). God's covenant with us (John 6:28, 29, 40, 54; 1 John 5:11, 12; Rev. 22:14; Rom. 2:6-10). VISIONS OF GOD. Stephen's vision of Christ (Acts 7:55, 56). Paul's visions (Acts 9:3-6; 2 Cor. 12:1-4). John's visions (Rev. 1:9-18).

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

For all the lessons of this quarter: *Commentaries*, of Keil, Cook (*Bible Commentary*), Spence (*Pulpit Commentary*); *Ellicott (Handy Commentary)*; Lange, Bush, Ewald, Murphy, Von Gerlach, Jacobus, "Jamieson, Fawcett, and Brown" (J., F. and B.), Clark, Henry; *The People's Bible*, by Joseph Parker; *The Annotated Bible*; *The Comprehensive Commentary*; *Ehrett's Evenings with the Bible*; *Notes*, by C. H. M.; *Geikie's Hours with the Bible*; *Smith's Old Testament History*; *Cowles' Hebrew History*; *Stanley's History of the Jewish Church*; *Biblical Museum*. See also H. C. Trumbull's *The Blood-Covenant*.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Vers. 1, 2. There are some who live nearer to God than others, and have more intimate communion with him. It is for them to bring down to others the blessings they have received.

2. Ver. 3. The Bible is our Book of the Covenant. (Testament, as a name of the Bible, means Covenant.)

3. It is our reasonable service to consecrate ourselves to God, and to promise to obey his revealed will.

4. There is great advantage in a public profession of our allegiance to God. It confirms our resolves; it saves us from some temptations; it impresses our duty on our conscience; it gives power to our example; it gives honor to God.

5. Vers. 4-8. God confirms his covenant with us, promising us great blessings for time and eternity if we will love and obey him.

6. The new covenant, like the old, must be confirmed by blood, the life, even of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

7. The new covenant, to save all who trust in Jesus, is better than the old covenant of works inasmuch as it (1) does not lessen the works, but exalts them, and (2) it gives a new heart and new life and new power, of which all good works will be the natural outcome. It is the law written in the heart.

8. Vers. 9-12. To the wicked God seems surrounded with clouds and darkness and terror; to the obedient God reveals himself in peace and glory and beauty.

9. The pure in heart shall see God.

10. To commune with God in friendship is the highest hope and joy and glory of men.

11. Ver. 11. In consecration and communion with God even the commonest daily duties are sanctified and glorified.

12. Ver. 12. When we are most religious we are most inclined to proclaim the law. Know whether you have been with God upon the mount by knowing how much law you have brought back with you (*Parker*), or rather the spirit that loves the law and obeys the law in love.

13. Take warning; for two of the men who saw the vision failed to receive it into their hearts and perished in disobedience (Lev. 10: 1-3).

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The Book of Exodus. CONNECT this lesson with the one on the Commandments a year ago.

SUBJECT, — GOD'S COVENANT WITH HIS PEOPLE.

I. THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT, with some account of the duties it inculcated, its promises, and the reason for giving it at this time. Teach that the Book of the New Testament is really the New Covenant.

Illustration. In a late *Literary World* was this question: "If you were imprisoned for life, and could only have two works for your library, what two would you choose?" It elicited many answers, and almost universally one of the books chosen was the *Bible*, our book of the Covenant. On the other the choice varied.

II. GOD'S COVENANT WITH HIS PEOPLE (vers. 3-8).

NOTE the sacrifices and ceremonies, and the reason for them.

COMPARE the sacrifice of Christ and the blood of the New Covenant.

GOD'S COVENANT now with us. His promises to save, keep, guide, bless, etc. Quote Scripture.

THE CONDITION of the covenant is obedience on our part. Quote Scripture.

FIND in the word of God the many passages relating to God's covenant with men.

OUR DUTY and privilege to put ourselves in covenant relations to God, so that he will be our God and we shall be his people (see Rom. 12: 1).

Illustration. *Obedience.* Miss Havergal tells a story in verse of a young girl named Alice, whose music-teacher insists upon her practising very difficult music. To Alice it seems cruel that she may not play easy pieces like other girls. Her hand wearies, and with clouded brow she makes a protest. The master will not yield, and she writes home to her father, who answers kindly, but firmly, that her teacher knows what is best. "Trust and obey" is her father's advice. Persuaded to try again, she at length masters Beethoven's masterpiece. Years afterward at a brilliant assembly of musical artists, Alice is invited to play some suitable strains. She selects the very piece which was once so difficult, but which, thoroughly learned, has never been forgotten. She plays it with pure and varied expression, secures the rich approval of one of the masters of song, who confesses that even to him Beethoven's music had never seemed so beautiful and so suggestive as in her rendering.

"Then swift up flashed a memory,
A long-forgotten day,
A memory of tears once shed,
Of aching hand and puzzled head,
And of the father's word that said,
'Trust and obey.'" — *Judson*.

III. THE VISION OF GOD (vers. 1, 2, 9-12).

Illustrations. Cowper once was asked to write a hymn, when, in his depression, he replied that he felt so far from God, that "as far as the east is from the west" seemed to be cohesion. There is no joy far away from God. The nearer God, the greater the joy and the radiance, as the greater the light, the nearer we are to the lamp.

Illustration. Common life is transfigured by the presence of God, as dull glass by the rays of the sun; as the fisherman's hut in Goethe's *Tale of Tales*: as stained glass windows by the light within.

EXAMPLES. Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3: 2). Moses on Sinai (Ex. 33: 18-23). Elijah on Sinai (1 Kings 19: 11-13). Isaiah's vision (Isa. 6: 1-7). Paul's vision (2 Cor. 12: 1-4). John's vision (Rev. 1: 9-18).

IV. NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. As above.

LESSON II.—JULY 8.

THE GOLDEN CALF.—Ex. 32: 15-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*—1 JOHN 5: 21.**TIME.**—During the first half of July, B.C. 1491 (*Ussher*). At the close of Moses' forty days in the mount with God. Others place all these events later, B.C. 1300, or after the death of Rameses II., which date is uncertain.**PARALLEL ACCOUNT.**—Deut. 9: 11-21.**EXPLANATORY.**

I. The People waiting long for their Absent Leader.—After the Covenant feast with the elders half way up Mount Sinai, Moses left the rest, and taking Joshua with him, went farther up the mountain (24: 13), where in all probability the lower extremities or fringes of the dark enveloping cloud embosomed them in its sombre folds. The bright interior cloud of the glory seems to have been still higher up on the very apex of the mount (24: 16). It would seem that Moses and Joshua remained together for six days, pavilioned within the lower descending outskirts of the cloud, engaged in holy conference and fervent devotion, till on the seventh, perhaps the Sabbath day, Moses was ordered to leave Joshua, as they had both left the elders below, and ascend up to the topmost summit of the hallowed mount (24: 18). So in our upward moral progress, we are still to aim at something higher. Our arrival at one eminence still leaves us at the foot of another, which equally claims to be climbed. When on the seventh day the divine summons called Moses up to the utmost heights of the mountain, then we suppose the dark, thick cloud was rent and opened in the sight of all Israel, and the inner glory broke forth like devouring fire. In the midst of this opened cloud Moses was enabled boldly to enter, although to the multitude below it probably had the appearance of entering into the mouth of a fiery furnace which threatened instantaneous destruction. There he continued fasting forty days and forty nights, receiving further instructions, and no doubt enjoying the most transporting discoveries of the divine glory, while Joshua, in the meantime, no doubt continued to eat and drink daily while waiting for Moses' return.—*Bush*. During these forty days Moses was receiving instructions concerning his future duties, and specially concerning the erection of the tabernacle, the appointment of the Aaronic priesthood, and the services of the sanctuary (Ex. chaps. 25-31). In conclusion he received from God two tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments engraved by the hand of God (31: 18).—*Johnson*.

II. In the Meantime the People relapse into Idolatry.—Vers. 15-19. Moses, as we have seen, was absent about seven weeks, including the time of the covenant feast with the seventy elders, the week with Joshua, and the forty days alone in the presence of God. The people naturally grew restless. They did not know what had become of Moses (32: 1). He may have perished in the flaming summit of the mountain. They had known him but a very short time, and now he had left them in the very heart of the wilderness, far from the promised land, like sheep without a shepherd. Enemies might arise at any time and cut them off, as they had already been attacked by the Amalekites (17: 8-13). They had two things to help their faith, the glory on the mountain and the daily manna, proofs of God's care and protection. But in time even these miracles grew common.—*P*.

THE REASONS FOR THIS LONG ABSENCE. 1. As to *Moses*. It was his preparation, both spiritually and intellectually, for his long and difficult task. He could teach the people from actual knowledge and experience of God, and hence with power. He received the instruction he needed for forming the religious and political institutions of a new people. 2. It was a time of testing for *Aaron*, "who was destined to be the high priest of the covenant nation, was exposed to temptation in consequence of the rebellious desire of the people, and proved how unfit he was by nature for such an office. It was necessary that his natural weakness and unsuitness should be made apparent before he entered upon his office, that he might not be high-minded afterwards. This strange anomaly, presented by the priesthood in Israel, which showed so clearly that it was not the perfect and absolute priesthood, was to be brought out at the very first; namely, that the man who offered an atonement for sin was himself a sinner in need of atonement."—*Kurtz*. 3. It was a time of testing and trial for the *people*. They had just taken the oath of allegiance to God, and unanimously promised to obey him. But they were inexperienced. They had not acquired habits of intelligent and uniform obedience, their faith was unstrengthened by trial, and their old wayward

15. And ¹Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and ^a the two tables of the testimony *were* in his hand: the tables *were* written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other *were* they written.

16. And the ²tables *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God, graven upon the tables.

Rev. Ver.: *a.* with . . . in his hand, — tables that were written, etc.

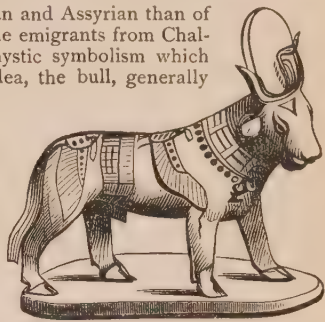
¹ Deut. 9: 15.

² Ex. 31: 18.

impulses and habits were awed but not destroyed. These weeks were their time of trial, of growth, of progress, of development. As Phillips Brooks has well said: "There was no danger that came to the Christian church, as there was no danger that came to the Christian man, that was not capable also of being considered as a chance, an *opportunity* of larger work and of developed life." — *P.*

The people thus deprived apparently both of God and leader, became discouraged, and sought for a remedy. They summoned Aaron, who had been joined with Moses in the mighty works of the past, and asked him to make them a visible image of their God, Jehovah. He bade them take their golden ear-rings and bring them to him. Out of these he made a golden image of a calf or young ox. He then built an altar before it, and proclaimed a feast, or festival, to Jehovah.

THE GOLDEN CALF. This was probably hollow, and of no great size. — *Pulpit Com.* It was a wooden figure laminated with gold. — *McClintock and Strong's Cyc.* A sacred bull, called Apis, was worshipped at Memphis, and another, called Mnevis, at Heliopolis (near Goshen, where they had lived), both being regarded as actual incarnate deities. But the bull form was more distinctive of the Babylonian and Assyrian than of the Egyptian worship, and it may be suspected that the emigrants from Chaldea had clung through all their wanderings to the mystic symbolism which had been elaborated in that primeval land. In Chaldea, the bull, generally winged and human-headed, represented the combination of wisdom, strength, and omnipresence, which characterizes divinity; and this combination might well have seemed to carnal minds no unapt symbol of Jehovah. — *Rawlinson.* Champolion observes that the only painting of the bull Mnevis yet discovered is colored *bright yellow*, evidently with the intention of representing a *golden image*. The artists of the French Institute at Cairo have a representation of an ancient Egyptian calf-idol. It is recumbent, with human eyes, the skin flesh-colored, and the whole after parts covered with a white and sky-blue diapered drapery. The horns are not on the head, but



GOLDEN CALF.

above it, and contain within them the symbolical globe surmounted by two feathers. Upon the neck is a blue and yellow yoke; and the flagellum, of various colors, is suspended over the back. — *McClintock and Strong's Cyc.* This image was not supposed to be a god itself, but a representative of Jehovah, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt (32: 5). "Their sin then lay, not in their adopting another god, but in their pretending to worship a visible symbol of him whom no symbol could represent." — *Pulpit Com.* Their worship broke the *second* commandment.

While these things were going on in the valley, the Lord told Moses on the mountain what the people were doing, and threatened to destroy them all, and to make of Moses a great nation. Then the nobleness of Moses shone forth in complete self-forgetfulness in his love of God and of the people, while he pleaded for their forgiveness (32: 7-14). Moses' character showed that he had been with God.

15. And Moses turned: *i.e.* returned, or set out on his return, apparently without making any communication to Joshua, who was waiting for him not far off (see ver. 17). — *Rawlinson.* And the two tables (or tablets) of the testimony (or witness). The Ten Commandments, so called because God in them testified his authority over the people, testified to their duty, the true principles of living; and the people, by accepting them, testified their subjection to God.

16. The tables were the work of God: shaped, *i.e.*, by the same power by which the commandments were inscribed upon them; not necessarily of matter newly created for the purpose. — *Pulpit Com.* This was to give them peculiar preciousness and authority.

17. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, *There is a noise of war in the camp.*

18. And he said, *It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear.*

19. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that ¹he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

¹ Deut. 9: 16, 17.

17. And when Joshua heard the noise. This shows that Joshua was somewhere upon the mountain, as we have seen above, and joined Moses on his descent. **The noise of the people as they shouted.** It is noted by travellers that, in all the latter part of the descent from Sinai, the plain at its base is shut out from sight; and that sounds would be heard from it a long time before the plain itself would open on the view. — *Stanley, Sinai and Palestine*, p. 44. Sounds, however, which come circuitously are always indistinct; and it is not surprising that Joshua, knowing nothing of the proceedings in the camp, should have fancied he heard a sound of war. — *Pulpit Com.* **There is a noise of war in the camp.** The Amalekites had once before attacked the people, and Joshua thought there might be another attack.

18. It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery: in a conflict of battle. Moses knew this, because the Lord had told him, while such a state of things as actually existed would never have suggested themselves to Joshua. **The noise of them that sing:** the loud songs and excited shouts of those who were excited by revelry and drink; for they "ate and drank and rose up to play" (ver. 6), which "play" in the Hebrew "implies the lewdness of the plays in which the people indulged. They probably consisted largely of dancing and leaping around the idol, with such orgies as were common to all heathen festivals." — *Johnson*.

19. And the dancing. Dances were a part of the religious ceremonial in most ancient nations. Sometimes they were solemn and grave, like the choric dances of the ancient Dorians, and (probably) that of David in front of the Ark (2 Sam. 6: 5-22); sometimes festive and joyous, yet not immodest, like the Pyrrhic and other dances at Sparta, and the dancing of the Salii at Rome; but more often, and especially among the Oriental nations, they were of a loose and lascivious character. In Egypt, the dancers appear to have been professionals of a degraded class, and the dancing itself to have been always sensual and indecent. We must suspect that it was this sort of dancing in which the Israelites were engaged — whence the terrible anger of Moses. — *Pulpit Com.*

THE ATTRACTIONS OF IDOLATRY. It has often seemed strange that the Israelites at this time and for so many generations after, were so easily led into idolatry. 1. In the first place, they longed for some visible representation of God which would appeal to their senses, while Jehovah was unseen. 2. The great and powerful nations around them were idolaters. Idols seemed to have power to build up their greatness. Idolatry was fashionable, and in favor with learning, wealth, and power. 3. But perhaps the chief attraction consisted in the sports, the revelry, the licentious freedom, appealing to every passion, with which idols were worshipped. In the revels of idolaters there was no restraint, no confession of sin, no costly sacrifices, except to passion, but they could serve every evil in the name and under the sanction of their gods; while on the other hand, the worship of Jehovah was in perfect contrast. It was spiritual, moral, and pure; it restrained all sin; it required the confession and forsaking of wrong; it appealed to the higher nature. — *P.*

IDOLS OF THE HEART. Have we made any calves? Ah, many. We have been great at idol-making. Can I count the calves we have worshipped? the unholy catalogue: Pride, Fashion, Gluttony, Self-Indulgence, Wealth, Station, Influence, Appearances, — all calves of our making, calves of gold. — *Joseph Parker*. Whatever we make first in our heart's love, that is our god. That to which we sacrifice precious things is our God. Whosoever gives up God's commandments, or right, or honor, or truth, or character, or usefulness, for the sake of any gain or of attaining any end, is an idolater. — *P.*

III. The Idol-Worship stopped by the Advent of their Indignant Leader. — Vers. 19-24. 19. As soon as he came nigh the camp. Then the whole disgraceful scene below burst upon him, and aroused his feelings to the highest pitch of indignation.

20. ¹And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt *it* in ^bthe fire, and ground *it* to powder, and strewed *it* upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of *it*.

21. And Moses said unto Aaron, ²What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so ^cgreat a sin upon them?

22. And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: ³thou knowest the people, that they *are set on mischief*.⁴

23. For they said unto me, ⁴Make us gods, which shall go before us: for *as* for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot ^enot what is become of him.

Rev. Ver.: *δ*. with fire; *c*. a great sin; *d*. evil; *e*. know not.

¹ Deut. 9: 21. ² Gen. 20: 9; 26: 10.

³ Ex. 14: 11; 15: 24; 16: 2, 20, 28; 17: 2, 4. ⁴ Ex. 32: 1.

We need sight as well as hearing, in order to fully awake our feelings to the wrongs and crimes around us. **And Moses' anger waxed hot.** Indignation rather than anger, the indignation which every holy soul must feel at the wrongs which mar God's work, ruin the people, and debase and degrade those whom he would bring into a better life. The soul that does not at times flame and burn with indignation at evil, has no deep and holy love of the good. — *P.* **And he cast the tables out of his hands.** The two tables of stone, on which God's own finger had written the Ten Commandments. **And brake them beneath the mount:** at the foot of the mount; giving at once a terrible significance for all future time to the phrase, a *broken law*. For both Moses and the people, though in different ways, were showing by their acts that the first use to which man puts God's law is to break it. Both tables were broken, for idolatry had been followed by licentiousness. — *Wm. Smith.* Moses broke the stone tables of the law, in order more impressively to write the law on the living tables of their hearts.

20. **And he took the calf.** Note the power of a single man, filled with the spirit of God, brave and strong in consciousness of right, over 600,000 men who knew they were wrong. **And burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder.** Silver and gold subjected for a short time to a white heat, which may be easily produced by bellows, readily calcine, and are then easily crushed to a fine powder. — *Pulpit Com.* The stock of the idol, being probably of wood, was burned. **And strewed it upon the water.** In the brook from which alone they were supplied with drink (Deut. 9: 21). **And made the children of Israel drink of it.** Not perhaps that he *constrained* them to this; but having no other water for their daily use than that of the brook which descended out of the mount (Ex. 17: 6; Deut. 9: 21), they could not avoid, when they drank at all, drinking this mixture. — *Bush.*

OBJECT OF THIS TREATMENT. 1. Moses demonstrates to the people the utter weakness and vanity of idols. They could not resist a single man, much less Jehovah. One man could grind the idol to powder. 2. They were compelled not only to see this, but to test it by their own experience. They were compelled "to swallow their God," and if he had any power at all he would revenge himself on them by bringing sickness and pain. 3. They were taught also in a most impressive manner, that "the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways," and that they must "eat the fruit of their own doings." 4. The powder mixed with their drink "signified to them that the curse they had thereby brought upon themselves, would mingle itself with all their enjoyments, and embitter them." — *Henry.* 5. The breaking of the tables was an object lesson to them that they had broken God's covenant, and could no longer claim his promises and protection. — *P.*

21. **And Moses said unto Aaron:** because he was left in charge of the people. **What did this people unto thee?** What was the necessity or pressure under which *he* acted, for Moses well knew that Aaron would not himself propose such a thing as they had done.

FIRST EXCUSE: THE PEOPLE COMPELLED HIM. 22. **And Aaron said, Let not, etc.** The reasons assigned by Aaron for his conduct are honest, but frivolous. He makes a candid statement of the facts, but leaves himself wholly unjustified. — *Bush.* **Thou knowest the people that they are set on mischief.** They were untrained, full of evil impulses, hard to control, and ready to do evil to any who opposed them. "According to a Jewish tradition found in the later Targums, Aaron was terrified by seeing Hur, his colleague in authority (Ex. 24: 14), slain by the people because he had ventured to oppose them." — *S. Clark.* The fact that Hur does not appear subsequently in the history of Israel, may lend a

24. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break *it* off. So they gave *it* me: then^g I cast it into the fire, and there¹ came out this calf.

25. And when Moses saw that the people *were*² naked,^h (for Aaron³ hadⁱ made them naked unto *their* shame among their enemies,)

26. Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who^k *is* on the LORD's side? *let him come* unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.

Rev. Ver.: *g.* and; *h.* were broken loose; *i.* had let them loose for a derision; *k.* whoso is . . . let him come.
¹ Ex. 32: 4. ² Ex. 33: 4, 5. ³ 2 Chron. 28: 19.

slight support to the tradition. Others think that Aaron hoped that, as he could not control the people, he could lead them into a false worship of Jehovah as better than outright idolatry. He would "do evil that good might come," and met with the usual failure. Still others think Aaron did not intend at first to make the idol, but thought that when they found that they must give up their golden ornaments, they would refuse. But in this he was mistaken, for in a case of vice or self-will there is no sacrifice the human heart will not make. Moses does not deign to answer this excuse, for Aaron's own heart well knew that all these things were no apology for weakness and moral cowardice in a leader, for want of faith in God and steadfastness to duty. He should have said, "I can die, but I cannot do this wrong." His courage and faith would have saved the people. — *P.*

SECOND EXCUSE: IT JUST HAPPENED. *Providence was to blame.* 24. I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. It might perhaps appear from the letter that Aaron intended to insinuate that the calf was produced by accident, or by some invisible or magical operation, and that he was as much surprised at the result as any one else could be. We take it rather as a brief and somewhat garbled account of the process of formation, upon the details of which he did not like to dwell, though he would not deny his agency in the affair. He confesses that he took the gold and melted it, and that the calf was the result; but he excuses himself from reciting all the particulars of the process. — *Bush.*

IV. **The Punishment of their Idolatry.** — Vers. 25, 26. 25. And when Moses saw that the people were naked. The Rev. Ver. has it, *were broken loose*; i.e., from all restraints, were unruly, in helpless anarchy and disorder; had broken loose from Moses' authority, and the commandments of God. On the other hand, the *Pulpit Com.* and Rawlinson think the Authorized Version may be defended. "Moses saw that most of the people were still without the garments that they had laid aside when they began to dance, and were probably still engaged in dancing and shouting." — *Pulpit Com.* Unto their shame among their enemies. Amalekites were no doubt still hovering about the camp; indeed, the tribe probably still held most of the surrounding mountains. — *Pulpit Com.* Their enemies would exult over their short-lived piety, and would see an opportunity of attacking them in their reckless, disordered, unprepared condition; especially as they had thus rejected the covenant and protection of Jehovah, who had formerly done such wonderful works for them.

26. Moses stood in the gate of the camp. The camp is supposed to have been protected by a rampart after the attack of the Amalekites (17: 8-13). — *J., F. and B.* Probably there was an open space there, where public assemblies could be held. Who is on the Lord's side? Who will stand decisively for God, and obey him at all hazards? It was no small thing to take this stand against the practices and passions of a whole people in a state of violent disorder. It cost something to be on the Lord's side. Let him come unto me: let him openly take his position, and declare to all the people by his actions that he chooses the Lord for his God.

WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE? There are two great-interests on foot in the world, with the one or the other of which all men are siding. The interest of sin and wickedness is the Devil's interest, and all wicked people side with it. The interest of truth and holiness is God's interest, with which all godly people side; and it is a case that will not admit a neutrality. It concerns us all to inquire whether we are on the Lord's side or not. — *Henry.* We show that we are on the Lord's side by obeying his commands, by a public profession of faith, by standing by the right even when it costs a great deal, by doing God's work. And all the sons of Levi: that is, Moses' own tribe. This was a real preparation for their work of the priesthood. Other individuals joined with them. Here was a fair oppor-

tunity for repentance, for amnesty and pardon. None but the incorrigible were slain. — *P.* For the most part, however, the Israelites preferred to retire within their tents, willing to abandon the mob, but unwilling to fight against it. A large company still maintained an attitude of defiance; they were assailed by the warriors of Jehovah, who fought with a holy zeal, forbidden to spare even their own brothers. About 3000 persons were slain before the rebellion was quelled and order restored. This work accomplished, Moses returned to Mount Sinai, where he engaged in the most earnest supplications for the sinful nation (Ex. 32: 30-32). He preferred death to the rejection of his people, and thus again showed himself the type of Christ, who laid down his life for the world. He was heard; and Jehovah renewed his promises of mercy (Ex. 32: 33, 34); but with a qualification that the people should suffer, though they should not be destroyed, a qualification which explains the plagues with which they were immediately afflicted (Ex. 32: 35), and in part, also, the exclusion of the whole generation from the promised land (Ex. 32: 34; Num. 14: 26-35). — *Johnson.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

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PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Every Christian, and especially every leader, has need of periods of retirement, away from noise, and business, alone with God and his goodness. He that gives must first receive nourishment, inspiration, comfort. — *Parker.*
2. How weak often are the promises and professions made under favorable circumstances. There is need of perpetual care and training and watchfulness.
3. There are many modern idols, — passion, wealth, honor, pleasure, ambition, appetite.
4. "Sin makes men *think* like fools; sin makes men *act* like fools."
5. Ver. 19. Mark the power of one brave, true man when he is right, over multitudes who are conscious of wrong. "One with God is a majority." "One shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight."
6. Vers. 21-24. There is a great temptation to throw the blame of our sins upon others.
7. That is a vain and mean excuse which gains all its force from the fact that we are weak and cowardly.
8. All excuses for wrong-doing are vain.
9. The failures and errors of Christians make them a shame to their enemies; they should be doubly on their guard.
10. There are two sides, God's side and Satan's side; the good side and the bad side.
11. And we must choose on whose side we will stand.
12. It is a good thing to be compelled to take sides positively, and openly confess where we stand.
13. There is great comfort, consecration, and many duties on God's side.
14. Those who take Satan's side, must expect Satan's reward. "The wages of sin is death."
15. Severity to obstinate sinners is mercy to all.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

THE CONNECTION with the last lesson.

THE LONG-ABSENT LEADER, and the reasons for his absence. How the people were tested by this.

SUBJECT, — IDOLATRY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

I. THE GOLDEN CALF. IDOL WORSHIP (vers. 15-19). Give the HISTORY of the formation of this idol. Their MOTIVES also. THE COMMANDMENTS which the people broke. MODERN IDOLS. What is an idol of the heart? In what way modern idols are worshipped.

II. VAIN EXCUSES (vers 19-24). The RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION of Moses, all the more severe from his having been so long in the pure light of God's presence.

THE POWER OF ONE BOLD MAN on the side of right.

Illustration. Milton is true to nature when he relates that in the presence of the unsullied seraph —

“ Abashed the Devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely.”

Illustration. *The destruction of the idol.* We read in Bede that Northumbria was converted chiefly through the priest Coifi running a tilt at the great idol of the day, and throwing it to the ground (*Eccles. Hist.* ii. 13).

Illustration. A wonderful illustration of the power of one person for the redemption of people from idolatry by the bold destruction of the idol, showing that the idol is powerless, was given in 1825, by Princess Kapiolani of the Hawaiian Islands. The goddess Pele was supposed to have her abode in the fiery abyss of the crater of that greatest of volcanoes, Kilauea, and her prophets denounced the most awful retribution on those who apostatized from her worship. But Kapiolani, in order to destroy the superstitious belief in the goddess, walked a hundred miles over the roughest ground and up the volcano's steep sides, against the entreaties of multitudes, and the warning of a prophetess of Pele. Reaching the top, she descended some hundreds of feet to the black ledge of the crater, amid some of the most terrible natural phenomena, a mass of molten lava upheaving and surging over the breadth of half a mile, through the agency of a mighty unseen power. There Kapiolani ate the berries consecrated to the goddess, and threw the seeds into the seething mass, and returned unharmed. This was a rare act of moral heroism. See Anderson's *Sandwich Islands*.

Illustration. Trench, in one of his poems, gives the story of Mahmoud, the idol-breaker, the great Mohammedan conqueror of India, coming to the huge idol, 15 feet high, at Somnat. He was about to destroy it, when the priests threw themselves before him, and offered an enormous ransom if he would spare their idol. After a moment's pause, Mahmoud declared that he would rather be known as the breaker than the seller of idols, and struck the image with his mace. His example was followed: the image was broken by the blows, when from its hollow interior were poured forth such a quantity of diamonds and precious stones as more than repaid him for the ransom he refused. So it is that, whatever pleasures and delights the idols of our hearts may offer if we spare them, we shall find that in their destruction, in letting God “rule supreme and rule alone” in our hearts, are far greater riches of joy and blessing. — P.

THE VAIN EXCUSES OF AARON, like all our excuses for sinning.

III. WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE? (vers. 25, 26). The choice, the difficulties of the decision, the value of a firm and decided stand.

IV. THE PUNISHMENT OF THE IDOLATERS. Their idol was destroyed. All they had expended on it was wasted — they had to prove by their own experience that the idol was vain; and those who boldly refused to repent, who were defiant in their sin, were slain.

LESSON III. — JULY 15.

GOD'S PRESENCE PROMISED. — Ex. 33: 12-23.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* — MATT. 28: 20.

TIME. — July, B.C. 1491. Soon after the last lesson; two months after the exodus.

PLACE. — Sinai, and the valley before it.

INTRODUCTION.

In our last lesson we saw the apostasy of the people from their covenant with God, and the punishment that followed, especially in the destruction of three thousand of the obstinate and rebellious ones. The next day (32: 30-33) Moses returned to God in the mount and pleaded with all his heart for the forgiveness of the people, even asking that he himself might be blotted out from God's book (the book that contains the list of his children and heirs), rather than that the whole people perish. In to-day's lesson we see the answer to this prayer, the further consequences of the apostasy, and the final restoration of the people to their covenant relations.

12. And Moses said unto the LORD, See, ¹thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, ²I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight.

¹ Ex. 32: 34. ² Ex. 33: 17. Gen. 18: 19. Ps. 1: 6. John 10: 14, 15. 2 Tim. 2: 19.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Consequences of breaking the Covenant.—The people having broken their covenant with God, by making and worshipping an image, made it impossible for God to fulfil his part of the covenant, which was based on the condition of obedience on their part. To take no notice of their disobedience, or to pass it over lightly, would have been to place a premium on sin, and to prepare the way for future disregard of the covenant and the utter failure of all the divine plans for the good of the people. Therefore it was a slow and difficult way of discipline by which the people were restored to favor, through penalties and repentance and prayer. "The way of transgressors" was "hard," to prevent the people from going that way again; and the prize of God's favor so difficult to gain, that it might seem the more precious. It was not because God did not wish to help and favor them, but that he might give his blessings effectually.

(I.) THE THREATENING. "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (32: 33). Those who sin and continue in sin cannot be numbered with the children of God. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The only way of escape was by ceasing to sin and receiving forgiveness.

(II.) PUNISHMENT. "And the Lord plagued the people because they made the calf" (32: 34, 35). This refers to the destruction of the 3000 (32: 28), and to all the troubles and sorrows which came upon the people for their sins during the 40 years' wanderings, including the fact of their wandering so long, and the exclusion of nearly all that generation from the promised land. God would not destroy them as a people, but he punished them as individuals.

(III.) THEIR GUIDANCE COMMITTED TO INFERIOR AGENCIES (33: 2). The great and glorious Shekinah, the pillar of cloud and of fire, was to remove from them, and an angel was to be sent before them. This may refer to God's providential guidance. The wind and lightning are called God's angels (Heb. 1: 7), and horns were sent to do the work which is here attributed to the angel (Ex. 23: 28; Josh. 24: 12).

(IV.) AS A SYMBOL of this change, the "tent of meeting" was placed without the camp, instead of among the people, and the pillar of glory stood over it there, instead of over the camp (33: 7-10). This was not the tabernacle, for that was not yet made, but an ordinary tent used for a time in its place.

(V.) AS A CONTINUED REMINDER of their sin and repentance, they were to take off all their ornaments (for out of such ornaments the idol calf had been made), and not put them on again during their journey (33: 4-6). The "put off" in ver. 5 means rather *keep off* the ornaments which the people themselves had left off (ver. 4).—*P.*

II. The Lord again becomes their Guide and Guard.—Vers. 12-17. 12. And Moses said unto the Lord. Probably at the "tent of meeting" without the camp (vers. 7-10). See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people (ver. 1). "I feel the weight of this charge more than ever, in consequence of this breach of the newly made and willingly accepted covenant. This has interrupted the happy relation in which the people stood to thee. I do not yet fully comprehend the new relation in which they are to stand." Thou has not let me know whom thou wilt send. Moses finds the promises of 32: 34 and 32: 2 ambiguous. What is meant by "mine angel" and "an angel"? Is it the "angel" of 23: 20-23 or no? If not, who is it?—*Rawlinson*. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name. See Ex. 3: 4, where Jehovah calls Moses by his name; also Isa. 43: 1; 49: 1. To recognize one by his name expresses intimacy.—*Johnson*.

GOD KNOWING US BY NAME. (1) God takes a living, personal, peculiar interest in each redeemed soul; bending over it continually with infinite tenderness; watching each doubt, each fear, each trial, each temptation, each fall, each rising again, each conflict, each victory, each defeat; watching each and all with a solicitude as special and particular as if it were upon it that the exclusive regards of his loving heart were fixed.—*Hanna*. (2) He metes out our lives to us as individuals. Providence is not merely the ordering of general laws, so that what is best for the whole will come to pass, no matter who is crushed in the

13. Now therefore, I pray thee, ¹if I have found grace in thy sight, ²shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that ^aI may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation *is* ³thy people.

14. And he said, ⁴My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee ⁵rest.

15. And he said unto him, ⁶If thy presence go not *with me*, carry us not up hence.

Rev. Ver.: a. to the end that. ¹ Ex. 34: 9. ² Ps. 25: 4; 86: 11; 119: 33. ³ Deut. 9: 26, 29. Joel 2: 17.

⁴ Ex. 13: 21; 40: 34-38. Isa. 63: 9. ⁵ Deut. 3: 20. Josh. 21: 44. Ps. 95: 11. ⁶ Ex. 33: 3; 34: 9.

process; but all things work together for the individual good of those that love him. (3) He assigns our duties to us as individuals, giving each the work fitted for him to do. — *P.* And (a continuation of what God had said) **thou hast also found grace in my sight.** See Ex. 32: 10, where God gives Moses the strongest possible assurance of his favor. God had offered to destroy the whole nation of Israel, and raise up another from Moses' loins, and this token of good-will he lays hold of as a ground of hope that the object of his entreaty would not be denied him. — *Bush.*

13. Now therefore: if, or since this is so. Shew me now thy way. That is, show me the way in which thou wouldst have thy people conducted to their inheritance. Show me thy views and purposes, thine *intended ways* of acting, and thy requirements of me in reference to this great object. — *Bush.* You have shown me the tabernacle, the offerings, thy merciful dealings. Show me now what all these things are to be when completed; the glorious building which is to be reared from these materials. **That I may know thee.** He would know God's *nature* from his "*way*." What God did would show what God was. But more than this, if God revealed his character, that would show the actions which Moses could expect to see flowing from it. As Christ said to his disciples, I call you not servants, but I call you friends; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; so Moses would be the friend of God, knowing his heart, his purposes, his will. The best of all knowledge is the knowledge of God, and only those who live near him in faith and obedience can know him. — *P.* **That I may find grace in thy sight.** He makes the fact of his having found grace already an argument for his finding still more. Grant me *light* that I may continue to yield thee *love*. — *Bush.* **And consider that this nation is thy people.** Even though they have broken thy covenant while eating bread from heaven, and viewing thy glories on Sinai's summit, yet they are thy people, chosen by thee, inheriting thy promises, redeemed by thee.

THE PRAYER was thus for three things: (1) To know whom God would send for his guide and helper; (2) to know God's way of dealing with the people; (3) to have the people restored to God's covenant favor.

THE PRAYER was (1) earnest; (2) consecrated; (3) unselfish; (4) for high spiritual blessings; (5) pleading the promises.

THE ANSWER to all these petitions is included in the one promise that follows.

14. And he said, My presence shall go with thee: my own presence, not merely that of an angel. — *Pulpit Com.* *My Shekinah* shall go. Arab. "My Light (or Splendor) shall walk with thee until I cause thee to rest." The same visible symbol of the divine presence which they had hitherto enjoyed should be granted to accompany the host in their onward march to Canaan. — *Bush.* **And I will give thee rest:** in the promised land; in the completion of his great work; in the triumph over all enemies; and rest in the meantime in the assurance that these things should be accomplished.

GUIDANCE AND REST. (1) Guidance on life's journey in the unknown future; (2) guidance amid darkness and danger; (3) guidance in solving all difficult practical questions; (4) guidance by God's manifest presence in Jesus and in the Word, a pillar of cloud and of fire; (5) guidance to a safe rest in the promised land; rest of faith, confiding in our guide; rest from undue anxiety; rest of free and glad activity in God's service; rest in communion and friendship with God; rest in heaven. — *P.*

15. If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. It was natural to repeat and intensify this prayer. For this outburst of emotion, at the relief of his anxieties concerning the withdrawal of the divine presence, shows us what was the real burden of his heart. He would have preferred that the people should remain in the wilderness, denied the possession of Palestine, if they could not pursue their enterprise under the immediate guidance of Jehovah. The reason is assigned in the next verse. — *Johnson.*

16. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? ¹*is it* not in that thou goest with ^bus? So ²shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that *are* upon the face of the earth.

17. And the LORD said unto Moses, ³I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for ⁴thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

18. And he said, I beseech ^e thee, shew me ^bthy glory.

19. And he said, ⁶I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will

Rev. Ver.: ^b. with us, so that we be; ^c. I pray. ¹ Num. 14: 14. ² Ex. 34: 10. Deut. 4: 7, 34. ² Sam. 7: 23. ¹ Kings 8: 53. Ps. 147: 20. ³ Gen. 19: 21. Jas. 5: 16. ⁴ Ex. 33: 12. ⁵ Ex. 33: 20. ¹ Tim. 6: 16. ⁶ Ex. 34: 5-7; Jer. 31: 14.

16. **For wherein shall it be known:** to Moses, to the people, to all who had dealings with them, including their enemies, who would be afraid of a people with such a God as theirs. **Have found grace in thy sight:** are under thy guidance and protection, within thy covenant. **Is it not in that thou goest with us?** With his visible and glorious presence. This removed would take away their courage and hope, make them weak, a prey to temptations and to enemies. **So shall we be separated:** or distinguished from all other peoples. All other nations were idolaters; these worshipped one God. Others followed the light of nature; these the commandments of God. Others trusted in idols; these in the one living God. And the visible manifestation of God, with the real presence in it, distinguished these people from all others.

GOD'S PEOPLE A SEPARATE PEOPLE. Separated by having God's word, by trusting God's promises, by receiving God's favor, by following God's guidance, by yielding to God's training, by higher living, by nobler purposes, by broader outlook, by larger hopes, by sweeter peace, by consciousness of God's presence, by an assurance of heaven. — *P.*

17. **I will do this thing also.** A more clear and definite statement of the answer to Moses' more definite prayer. Henceforth there is no doubt. The people are forgiven, and the visible presence of God is to remain with the people.

III. The Nature and Glory of their Lord and Guide. — Vers. 18-23. **MOSES' PRAYER FOR HIMSELF.** Not till he had received full assurance of the people's restoration to favor did Moses prefer any request for himself. Then, however, he made use of the privilege granted him to speak with God, "as a man speaketh unto his friend," in order to obtain a blessing for which his spiritual nature craved, and than which he could conceive nothing more desirable.

18. **He said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.** Moses had respect primarily to a *visible glory*, something which could be seen with the bodily eyes. We do not say that the object of his request was *exclusive* of such an inward sense or discovery of the divine perfections as we should perhaps most naturally connect with a sight of the glory of God; but we are still satisfied from the context that the prominent idea conveyed in the words of Moses' request is that of a *sensible manifestation* of the divine glory. He was no doubt led to suppose that there was something still behind, — some ineffable brightness, or beauty, or majesty, — immensely transcending all that he had hitherto been permitted to witness. — *Bush.*

WHY MOSES ASKED THIS FAVOR. 1. All that he had yet seen of God was insufficient, — only raised his desire, only sharpened his appetite to see more. He craved for that "beatific vision" which is the final reward of them that are perfected in another world. — *Rawlinson.* 2. The divine mercy which, in spite of sin, yielded to the prayer of a man and consented to forgive the people and restore the broken covenant, was so surprising and overwhelming that Moses could but desire to study more closely its very source. 3. He sought the manifestation of the divine Being in order that now, as the covenant was about to be renewed, and as he was about to stand again as mediator between Jehovah and the people, he might speak with perfect intelligence of the Being whose mind he was to interpret. — *Johnson.*

THE ANSWER TO HIS PRAYER. The full answer, as we have seen in ver. 20, could not be given; but God gave him all he was capable of receiving, and in addition to that, other and higher things than he asked. So God still answers our prayers.

19. **I will make all my goodness pass before thee.** God's goodness is the heart of his glory. Moses should have such a vision of God's goodness and loving kindness as had

proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; ¹and will be ²gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

20. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for ³there^d shall no man see me, and live.

21. And the LORD said, Behold, *there is* a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a^e rock:

22. And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee ⁴in a cleft of the rock, and will ⁵cover thee with my hand while^g I pass by:

Rev. Ver.: *d.* for man shall not see me and live; *e.* the; *g.* until I have passed by.

¹ Rom. 9: 15, 16, 18.

² Rom. 4: 4, 16.

³ Gen. 32: 30.

Deut. 5: 24.

Judg. 13: 22.

Isa. 6: 5.

Rev. 1: 16, 17.

Ex. 24: 10.

⁴ Isa. 2: 21.

⁵ Ps. 91: 1, 4.

never entered his heart to conceive. — *P.* It is not clear how this was fulfilled. Perhaps, as God announced his name, — “the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,” etc. (34: 6, 7), — a revelation of God’s ineffable goodness was miraculously flashed into his inmost soul, and the thousand instances of it which he had known brought distinctly to his recollection, so as to “pass before him.” — *Rawlinson.* And I will proclaim the name of the Lord: his true nature and character. And will be gracious to whom I will be gracious. It is not meant that God’s favor is bestowed arbitrarily, but only that it is in any case *favor*, — a free gift, not earned nor merited. — *Rawlinson.* These words were probably uttered on the present occasion, in order to prevent both Moses and the Israelites from vain self-congratulation in the returning smiles of prosperity. But such expressions must not be so interpreted as to imply that he uses his royal prerogatives in an unreasonable manner; while his will is the ground of the favor which he bestows, it is guided by considerations of the highest wisdom; and though we cannot know in all instances what these are, we may be assured that the Infinite Wisdom cannot act in an irrational manner. Nor must the words be so interpreted as to sanction the error that God selected with partiality those whom he wills to bless; while his will is the ultimate ground of his favor, he has stated certain conditions which control its decisions; and those who comply with these conditions shall be saved. Thus, while he is a sovereign, he is not a despot, reigning in the spirit of caprice and favoritism. He is the Infinite Reason and the Infinite Justice; and he “is no respecter of persons.” — *Johnson.* And will shew mercy. It is mercy and love, above all things, that God delights to exercise. He shows mercy to thousands of generations, and visits iniquity only to the third and fourth, and that, even, for the sake of the mercy (see 34: 6, 7).

20. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: my unveiled glories, the fulness of my nature in its brightest aspect. “The face is that part of the human form which remains uncovered” (*Simpson*), and which is the most expressive. This refers not only to visible glory, but also to his character, and goodness, and plans in their perfections (34: 6, 7). For there shall no man see me, and live. Either (1) no man while living can see God as he is. It will require new powers, new senses, beyond those which belong to us in our present state of existence, to be able to see God’s full nature, as one born blind cannot understand the powers and glories of sight. Or (2) no person can survive the sight, as the eye is destroyed by looking steadily at the sun, and consumed instantly by gazing at its nearer glories through a telescope. When the divine glory filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40: 35), Moses could not enter it with safety. When the temple was dedicated, “The glory of the Lord filled the house, and the priests could not enter into the house, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord’s house” (2 Chron. 7: 1, 2). There are emotions of joy, admiration, and love which are more than the human spirit can endure. We can see God veiled, clouded, as the elders did upon the mount (Ex. 24: 10, 11); as Paul at Damascus, though that sight struck him blind; as we all may see him in Jesus Christ; as in heaven “his servants shall see his face.” — *P.*

21. There is a place by me. A place on the summit of Sinai, where God had been manifesting himself. — *Rawlinson.*

22. I will put thee in a cleft of the rock: a rocky recess or cave. And will cover thee with my hand: to shield and protect thee from the overpowering glory. As we look at the sun through clouds or smoked glass. — *P.*

THE CLEFT OF THE ROCK. God has many such places of safety for his children. He

23. And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; ^a but my face shall ¹ not be seen.

Rev. Ver.: *h. omit* "parts." ¹ Ex. 33: 20. John 1: 18.

shelters them from the storm of wrath for sin, from dangers that would overwhelm, in every time of trouble or sorrow. From these clefts of the rock we may see the vision of God's glory, as we do not see it in the peaceful valley below. — *P.*

"Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee."

23. And thou shalt see my back parts: my real but lesser glories; all that it is possible for man to behold. — Let us repeat, in reference to this whole gracious manifestation, that the glory beheld was unquestionably the glory of Christ. Nor are we prepared to deny that a resplendent human form, preintimative of the Divine Man, Christ Jesus, was vaguely presented to his view. At any rate, we would have the following passage attentively considered in this connection (Num. 12: 6-8): "And he said, . . . *and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold.*" What can be meant by Moses beholding "the similitude of the Lord," but his being favored with the display here recorded? And what is the similitude of the Lord but he who is the "brightness of the Father's glory and the *express image* of his person." — *Bush.* Of this express image we have hints in the transfiguration scene, and in John's vision of the glorified Jesus (Rev. 1: 13-18).

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Lord Houghton's poem, "Moses on Mt. Sinai," in Foster's *Poetical Illustrations*, vol. 2: 3798; Payson's *Works*, ii., p. 517, "God's Special Presence distinguishes his own People"; James W. Alexander's *Consolation*, p. 261, "Consolation from God's Promise never to Forsake." *Sermons* by Bishop Simpson, p. 175, "Lo, I am with you alway," and p. 348, "The Manifestation of the Divine Glory"; Trench's *Poems*, "The Monk and the Bird." The conjectures and traditions of the place of this vision, inconclusive as they must be, are given by Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, vol. i., p. 153.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. When once we have wandered from God into sin, it is no easy matter to be restored.
2. Vers. 12, 13. Knowing God's way is a great help to right living and right working. We can build better when we know the architect's plans. Hence the revelations of God's word, and the visions of the future are given to us.
3. He that has some of God's grace earnestly longs and prays for more.
4. Vers. 14-16. No one can safely go through life, with its dangers, its enemies, its conflicts, its unknown future, without the abiding presence of God.
5. God's presence brings us his power, his protection, guidance, comforts, forgiveness, love, character.
6. God's presence enables us to do his work, to aid the coming of his kingdom. A few fishermen, with God dwelling within them, have been transforming the world.
7. The presence of God with his people produces a wide difference and separation between them and all other men. — *Payson.*
8. In proportion as his presence is withdrawn from them, this difference and separation will diminish. — *Payson.*
9. The present experience of God's presence is the only proper evidence of his favor. No memories of the past or vague hopes of the future will suffice.
10. Vers. 18, 19. It is possible and desirable that we should see more of God's glory.
11. God's glory shines brightest in his mercy and love.
12. The vision of God teaches us humility and increases our faith.
13. The vision of God fits us for proclaiming and teaching his Gospel.
14. We have this vision (1) in his Word, (2) in Jesus Christ, (3) in the experiences granted through his Holy Spirit.
15. Ver. 20. There are blessings and visions and joys laid up for us, far beyond any that are possible in this life: unspeakable, and full of glory.
16. Vers. 23. All we yet know of God is the veiled and clouded revelation of his goodness, his wisdom, his purposes, his nature.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

CONNECT the last lesson with this by a brief review.

HAVE THE SCHOLARS READ the intervening verses.

SUBJECT, — THE LORD OF GLORY OUR GUIDE AND GUARD.

I. THE CONSEQUENCES OF BREAKING THE COVENANT. As recorded in the intervening verses and set forth in the *Explanatory*. Restoration from sin is no simple and easy matter. The greatest wisdom of God is shown in saving men from sin.

Illustrate by the difficulty of eradicating disease from the body, especially when it becomes chronic and all-pervasive.

II. THE LORD OUR ONLY SUFFICIENT GUARD AND GUIDE (vers. 12-17).

THE DANGERS and difficulties of the way.

NOTE MOSES' PRAYERS, and the way God answered them.

THE VALUE of knowing God's way.

Illustration. When we have piles of stone and timber, materials for a building we have to construct, it is a great aid to see the plans, the picture of the building. Moses could best teach the people if he understood the end and full meaning of the tabernacle, the sacrifices, the ceremonial. — P.

THE EFFECTS of God's presence with us.

THE SEPARATION and distinction between God's people and others.

III. THE GLORY OF OUR GUIDE AND GUARD (vers. 18-23).

THE DESIRE to know more of God.

Illustrate our inadequacy to comprehend all of God, by Trench's poem of "The Monk and the Bird."

THE BLESSEDNESS of having such a guide.

Illustrations. We cannot see God and live. (1) Bright light destroys the eye. (2) Great heat consumes the body. (3) Intense sound destroys the hearing.

Illustrations. History informs us that in the time of the great South Sea speculation in England, many, overjoyed by their success, became insane. At the restoration of Charles II., a number of nobility were so affected by the recovery of their titles and estates that they became diseased, and died. Leo X., one of the most renowned occupants of the Papal chair, was so rejoiced by a victory somewhat unexpectedly gained over his enemies, that he sank beneath the excitement. The heir of Leibnitz, the celebrated mathematician, on finding that a chest, filled, as he supposed, with papers, contained a large quantity of gold, became so excited by the discovery that he was seized with a fatal disease of the heart. Thus emotions, even of joy, may destroy life. — *Bishop Simpson*.

Illustration. Laura Bridgman, without sight or hearing, could not possibly, with her present senses, comprehend in any degree the extent, the glory, the joy, that come from seeing and hearing. Imagine one sense after the other given to her, what a new world would seem to be created to her! and yet it was always close around her. So we in the limitations of the body cannot possibly comprehend God. But what new glories will dawn upon us, what mysteries will be solved, when we shall see God as he is.

LESSON IV. — JULY 22.

FREE GIFTS FOR THE TABERNACLE. — EX. 35 : 20-29.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *God loveth a cheerful giver.* — 2 COR. 9 : 7.

TIME. — Autumn, B.C. 1491. More than 40 days after the last lesson, for Moses was on Mount Sinai another 40 days.

PLACE. — The valley Er Râhah before Mt. Sinai.

INTRODUCTION.

After God had answered Moses' prayer that he would guide them by his presence, and had shown him his glory, to stimulate his faith and prepare him for his great work, Moses was again summoned up into the mount. He took two tables of stone, and God again wrote out the Ten Commandments, his covenant laws, — and renewed the covenant with the people, repeating the most essential laws for the government of the nation (chap. 34). Moses

remained again 40 days in the mount (34: 28). When he descended his face shone with the light in which he had been dwelling, and the people noticed the radiance, though Moses was unconscious of it.

So men took knowledge of the disciples that they had been with Jesus. So our souls are ennobled and shining by communion with God. So the good are unconscious of their goodness, because it is so poor compared with the ideals they have been looking at, and the radiance in which they have been dwelling.

20. And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses.

21. And they came, every one ¹ whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, *and* they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle ^a of the congregation, and for all his ^b service, and for the holy garments.

Rev. Ver.: *a.* tent of meeting; *b.* all the service thereof.

¹ Ex. 35: 5, 22, 26, 29. 1 Chron. 29: 9.

² Cor. 8: 12; 9: 7.

EXPLANATORY.

I. A Summons to contribute for the Building of the Tabernacle. — Ver. 20. **THE ASSEMBLY** (35: 1). When Moses had returned from his second 40 days of communion with him, he assembled the whole congregation of Israel together for a great public meeting, that they might listen to a message from God himself.

The true objects of religious meetings are to worship God, and to hear a message from God. And he is best fitted to deliver this message, who, like Moses, has been abiding in communion with God.

THE ETHICAL MESSAGE (35: 2, 3). The first message was a reiteration of some of the most important duties which lay at the very basis of the nation's hopes; especially the duty of keeping the Sabbath. The sanctuary would soon become of little value, if the day set apart for worship was not observed. They must not do the secular works even of the sanctuary on the Sabbath day. Religion should be no excuse for desecrating the day set apart for religion.

THE PRACTICAL MESSAGE (35: 4-9). The people were then requested to bring a free-will offering to the Lord of the things they had brought out from Egypt. A contribution for the aid of religion is most appropriate to the Sabbath, and is a part of true worship, and an aid to devout feelings, expressing thanksgiving and loyalty to God, and good will to man. Religious action stimulates religious feeling.

THE WORTHY OBJECT (35: 10-19). The object of the contribution was the construction of the most beautiful tabernacle for the worship of God, and for its furnishing. It must be costly and beautiful to express as far as possible the worthiness and superiority of God and religion to all else. It exalted these to the first place in appearance, as they were in reality. Moreover the tabernacle was for all the people, the poorest as well as the richest, the lowliest as well as the greatest. The most beautiful things in the nation were not shut within the private walls of the individual, but made public, so that all could share in them alike. It is estimated that the tabernacle and its furniture cost about \$1,250,000, which was vastly more to them than the same amount with us.

THE CONGREGATION DISMISSED (ver. 20). **The congregation . . . departed from the presence of Moses.** They went home from the assembly to think over their obligations, and decide what they would do, and what part in this glorious work they could take.

APPLICATION. God has called us to give for a much more glorious object than even this costly tabernacle; even to make every heart a temple of the Holy Ghost; to bring every nation to be his peculiar people among whom he will dwell; to make the whole earth to become the new Jerusalem, where God shall abide in unspeakable splendor, the light and life and joy of all.

II. The Cheerful Givers. — Vers. 21, 22. **THE TAX.** A small tax, amounting to half a shekel of silver, or about thirty cents of our money, was levied upon each man, according to the divine directions (Ex. 30: 12-16), for the general support of worship, without regard to his wealth or poverty, in order to enforce the idea of the equal obligation of all to God. — *Todd.*

WILLING HEARTS. 21. And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up.

Every one whose heart was raised to a free and cheerful promptitude; and such undoubtedly was the case with the congregation *en masse*. — *Bush*. But it is implied that there were those whose hearts were stirred by neither gratitude for past mercies, nor opportunity to do good, nor love of God, nor patriotism. They were too fond of the world. They loved their possessions more than God. They were "mountains of ice in a sea of fire," men who did not believe in enthusiasm. — *P*. A cold professor of religion is the deadliest enemy of the Cross. Better have two men in your congregation who are in burning earnest, than a houseful of men whose souls are destitute of enthusiasm. You gain in weight what you lose in number. The prayer of every devout heart should be, "Baptize me as with fire." There are men and women who have concentrated themselves upon what they believe to be a divine work, and they are the men and women who make the noblest and brightest chapters in history. — *J. Parker*.

THE MOTIVES. Every one whom his spirit made willing: whose outward gifts flowed from a true and loving and generous spirit. The heart is the source of liberality; and gifts are of little value without the heart. (1) The gifts were an expression of a repentant spirit on account of their late transgressions (Lesson II.). — *P*. There was no doubt the working of a spirit very much akin to that awakened by the apostle and described in his second epistle to the Corinthian church (7: 11): "For behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carelessness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge." The idea of having once done evil ought to operate as a powerful incentive to ever after doing good. — *Bush*. (2) They would express their renewed loyalty to God and his covenant. They had broken the covenant, but they would prove by their gifts to this tabernacle which was to contain the ark of the covenant, that they had renewed their loyalty, and were heart and soul devoted to God and his commandments. (3) A third motive would be patriotism, the value of the place of worship to the nation. (4) The value of a place of worship for their own soul's growth in grace, and continued abiding in the love and law of God. **The tabernacle of the congregation.** The wonderful tent made for the manifest presence of God among his people, as the centre of worship for the whole congregation. It was a tent so that it could be moved with the people during their wanderings. It is described in chaps. 25-28, and is the subject of our next lesson.

BOTH MEN AND WOMEN. 22. And they came, both men and women. Hebrew: *the men, in addition to the women*; a peculiar phraseology, which implies, according to the Jewish critic Abrabanel, that the women came first and presented their offerings, and were then followed by the men. Nor has the prompt and forward obedience of woman ever belied this character in any age of the world. — *Bush*. The work of God in the world needs both men and women. It never can be done by either one alone. Every nation where women are shut out from the active work for God is a proof of this, written in black letters of sorrow, weakness, and defeat.

EACH ACCORDING TO HIS ABILITY. Each one brought what he had: gold, if he had gold (ver. 22); jewels, if he possessed jewels; purple and scarlet, if he possessed them (ver. 23). Those who could spin well brought the bright-colored fine linen which they had spun (ver. 25); the rich rulers brought precious stones and spices (vers. 27, 28); those with genius for devising curious works, or carving, or weaving, brought their talents and skill (vers. 30-35). Each one gave of what the Lord had given him.

ABUNDANTLY. The people brought so willingly and so freely, that there was more than enough, and Moses had to issue a proclamation restraining them from giving any more (36: 5, 6). It is the free giving from a willing heart for a worthy object that brings the largest gifts. According to the best estimates, the amount of gold was about a ton and a fifth (a ton of gold is now worth about a million dollars); of the silver, about four tons and a fifth; and of bronze or copper (the biblical brass), nearly three tons. This shows that the people gave very liberally. It is impossible to compute the exact amount per head, but it could not have been less than three dollars for each man. That would be a large average in our country; but they were a nation just escaped from slavery. Money was also worth much more among them than among us now. This, moreover, does not include the gifts of other materials, as precious stones, oil, spices, wood, wool, linen, and dye-stuffs, all of which were costly; nor does it make any account of the work contributed. — *Sunday-School Times*.

CO-WORKERS WITH GOD. All this giving was to carry out God's plan which he had revealed to Moses upon the mount. Everything was to be done according to the pattern (25: 40; Heb. 8: 5). God's plan was the only true plan.

REFLEX INFLUENCE ON THE GIVERS. God did not need these gifts. All the treasures

22. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets,^c and earrings, and rings,^d and tablets,^e all jewels of gold: and^g every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the LORD.

23. And¹ every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red^h skins of rams, and badgers' i skins brought them.

Rev. Ver.: c. brooches; d. signet-rings; e. armlets; g. even every man that offered an offering; h. rams' skins dyed red; i. seal skins. ¹ 1 Chron. 29: 8.

of the earth were his. He who could create the world with a word did not need these gifts of a small portion of that world. But all this was one of God's methods of training loyal and large-hearted men and women. It bound them to him with new interests and strong motives; it stopped their murmuring, and gave them good cheer; it gave them nobler objects, and led on to a more loving consecration.

"Who does the best his circumstance allows
Does well, acts nobly; angels could do no more."

APPLICATIONS. 1. God wants all his people to give and to work for his cause. 2. There is opportunity for men and women, for boys and girls, for rich and poor, for every variety of talent. 3. Every one should give willingly, cheerfully, gladly. 4. The gifts should be abundant for the work to be done. 5. Each should give of what he has. 6. He should give systematically. Not every one should give exactly a tenth; some should give more, some less; but every one should have a definite system and proportion, as the Lord has prospered him. 7. Every Christian needs the discipline and blessing which comes from giving of his time and money to the Lord. It enlarges his being, it exalts his character. 8. There should be enthusiasm in giving and doing, because the need is so great, and the Lord so good. As Joseph Parker says, "The one thing to be feared is *stagnation*. That is to be feared with all the terror possible to the human soul." Stagnation is the deadliest unbelief. 9. Every motive urges us on, love to God, gratitude, hope of doing good, the needs of men, the reflex spiritual blessing. 10. We are to give to carry out the divine plan for the redemption of the world in the divine way.

III. The Free Gifts. — Vers. 22-29. Each one brought according to his possessions.

22. And brought bracelets (*brooches*), and rings (*signet rings*), and tablets (*armlets*). Probably a bead necklace, such as was often worn by the Egyptians. — *Rawlinson*. Every man that offered, offered an offering of gold.

It is not meant that every man who offered anything gave with it an offering of gold, but simply that, besides those who brought the articles named, there were others who brought gold offerings of some different kind. — *Pulpit Com.* Men and women both wore golden ornaments. Money in the form of coins or bullion there was none in that early age. What money passed current with the merchant consisted of rings which were weighed, and principally of ornaments for personal decoration. Astonishment at the abundance of their ornaments is at an end when we learn that costly and elegant ornaments abounded in proportion as clothing was simple and scarce among the Egyptians, and some, entirely divested of clothing, yet wore rich necklaces. — *Hengstenberg*.

23. Blue, and purple, and scarlet. The colors either of some of the fine linen or of wool. **Fine linen:** i.e., white thread spun from flax, which is found to be the material of almost all the Egyptian dresses, mummy cloths, and other undyed fabrics. It is of a yellowish white, soft, and wonderfully fine and delicate. — *Rawlinson*. Some of the Egyptian linen was so fine that it sold for its weight in gold. **Goats' hair.** The common coarse material for tents. Even the goats' hair and rams' skins acquired so high a value in God's esteem from the motives which prompted the givers that they were accounted as oblations of pure gold. — *Bush*. **Red skins of rams.** These skins may have been tanned and colored like the leather now known as red morocco, which is said to have been manufactured in Libya from



1. Gold Egyptian bracelets.
2. Silver bracelet.
3. Bronze, with bell attached.
4. Iron, with Cornelian setting.
5. Bracelet of cowries.

24. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD'S offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim^k wood for any work of the service, brought it.

25. And all the women that were ¹wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both^l of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen.

26. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun^m goats' hair.

27. And ²the rulers broughtⁿ onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate;

Rev. Ver! : *k.* acacia wood; *l.* the blue, and the purple, etc.; *m.* spun the goats' hair; *n.* the onyx stones, and the stones to be set. ¹ Ex. 28: 3; 31: 6; 36: 1. Prov. 31: 19, 22, 24. ² 1 Chron. 29: 6. Ezra 2: 68.

the remotest antiquity. — *Cook.* **Badgers' skins** (*seal skins*). The substance spoken of would appear to have been leather formed from the skins of marine animals, which was well adapted as a protection against the weather. Pliny speaks of tents made of seal skins as proof against the stroke of lightning (*H. N.* II. 56), and one of these is said to have been used by Augustus whenever he travelled (*Sueton. Octavi. 90*). — *Cook.*

24. **Silver and brass:** or rather pure copper. The Egyptians had mines of gold, silver, and copper, some of them in the peninsula of Arabia. **Shittim wood.** The acacia, a gnarled and thorny tree, somewhat like a solitary hawthorne, but much larger. The timber is hard and close-grained, of an orange color, with a darker heart, well adapted for cabinet work. No other kind of wood was employed in the tabernacle or its furniture. — *Cook.* Those who had no silver and gold could at least go and cut and work this timber.

25. **All the women.** Here it appears that the women were as forward in the good work as the men. They were not only willing to *give*, but to *make*. They not only resigned their ornaments, but went immediately to work by spinning and weaving to fabricate such articles of tapestry as were needed for the tabernacle. As all are interested in the worship of God, so all should bear a part in it. — *Bush.* **Wise hearted:** skilful, expert. All who understood such work, and whose zeal was kindled by love for God's sanctuary. **Did spin with their hands.** Spinning was done by the women in very early times, particularly in Egypt, where women are represented on the monuments as busily engaged with the spindle. — *Keil.*

26. **All the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom.** This strong expression seems to imply that *peculiar* skill was required for spinning goats' hair. — *Cook.* Or else it required peculiar consecration to work on this common and coarser material, rather than on the delicate threads and beautiful colors. — *P.*

27. **And the rulers.** The more expensive articles required were furnished by the wealthier men; and these, among a patriarchal people, were the chiefs of the principal families. — *Todd.* **Brought onyx stones.** Scholars differ as to what stone is meant in the Scripture; but it is most probably some variety of the stone known in modern times as the "onyx," a stone formed of strata of different colors. It is called the onyx, because, as the color of the flesh appears through the nail (Greek *onyx*) of the human body, so the reddish mass which is below shines delicately through the whitish surface of the onyx. — *Rosenmuller.* When polished, it has a fine lustre: it is easily wrought into a gem of great beauty, much used for seals, rings, and cameos. — *McClintock and Strong.* They were two in number, each engraved with the names of six of the tribes of Israel; and were worn on the shoulders of the high priest, attached to the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, after the manner of modern epaulettes (*Ex. 28: 9-12*). — *Todd.* **Stones to be set.** These were precious stones, each of a different kind, and each engraved with the name of a tribe of Israel, which were set in four rows of three in each, in the breastplate of the high priest. (*Ex. 28: 17-20*). — *Todd.* **For the ephod.** This was an article worn by the high priest, made of linen, and richly embroidered with colors and gold. It consisted of little more than two shoulder-straps, fastened to a broad girdle; though in the opinion of some these shoulder-pieces were broadened so as to form an apron in front, and a similar and perhaps longer back-piece behind. — *Todd.* **And for the breastplate.** The breastplate was the most costly, beautiful, and glorious part of the high priest's dress. It was doubled, so as to form a kind of bag a span in length and in breadth; it was worn on the heart of the high priest. It was

28. And ¹spice,² and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense.

29. The children of Israel brought a ²willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all^p manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.

Rev. Ver.: *o.* the spice; *p.* all the work. ¹ Ex. 30: 23. ² Ex. 35: 21. 1 Chron. 29: 9.

enriched with twelve precious stones, all set in gold, each stone having written upon it the name of one of the tribes of Israel. — *Rodgers.*

28. And spice. All the odoriferous ingredients employed in the anointing oil, and incense, etc. **Oil for the light.** For the lamp that was to burn continually in the sanctuary. This was to be pure beaten olive oil. **Sweet incense.** For the burning of sweet odors; *i.e.*, upon the golden altar that stood in the holy place. Compare Ex. 30: 22-28. — *Bush.* Incense was a type of the prayers of the saints, fragrant with the love and worship which are pleasing to God.

29. Brought a willing offering. It was this fact which made (1) the offering pleasing to God; and (2) which made it a valuable factor in improving their own characters; and (3) which made it so abundant. — *P.*

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PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. God has given his people a great work to do, — to make the whole world his temple, and each soul a dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit.

2. Religious exercises uplift the people to the largest and most enthusiastic service of God.

3. Vers. 20, 21. It is a great blessing to the church to be earnest, generous, devoted, in behalf of God's work.

4. A right heart makes a liberal hand.

5. Ver. 22. Men and women must work together for the building up of God's kingdom. It will never have its best success while either are left out, or leave themselves out of the work.

6. The only true giving is that of the willing-hearted.

7. Giving should be systematic, proportionate, cheerful, liberal.

8. Every person is to bring what he has, gold, skill, work, precious things, common things.

9. The commonest things are sanctified by using them for the Lord.

10. When all give, give proportionately, give with willing hearts, and give of what God has given them, the Lord's treasury will be full to overflowing.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

In our last lesson the Israelites were restored to favor. Call to mind the progress of events in the completion of this work, till the assembly, which is the real commencement of our lesson to-day. Recall the time since the Exodus, and the place.

SUBJECT, — GIVING TO THE LORD.

I. A GREAT WORK TO BE DONE (ver. 20). Note the ASSEMBLY (35:1). The RELIGIOUS TEACHING. The SUMMONS to a great work. The GREAT WORK worthy of all their interest and enthusiasm, reaching down through all their history.

We have a GREATER WORK, more worthy, of deeper interest, of more enduring importance, of stronger claims, of more broad and far-reaching influence.

II. THE CHEERFUL GIVERS FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE WORK (vers. 21, 22).

THE MOTIVES made cheerful givers, — gratitude, repentance, love to God, the greatness and value of the work.

MEN AND WOMEN united together in the service.

Illustration. We are told of the Persian bird *Juftak*, which has only one wing. On the wingless side the male bird has a hook, and the female a ring. When thus fastened together, and only when fastened together, can they fly. The human race is that Persian bird, the *Juftak*. When man and woman unite, they may soar skyward, scorning the ground. — *Gail Hamilton*.

Illustration. At a meeting of the Presbyterian General Assembly, when the report on Missions gave a large sum as derived from legacies and the Women's Board, some one is said to have moved a vote of thanks to the dead men and the live women of our churches. Without doubt a large measure of the increased success of our churches within the last fifty years is due to the more active participation of the women, and the enlarged range of their activities.

EACH ACCORDING TO HIS ABILITY.

Illustration. *The Self-Restraint Box.* In a certain place in Japan, the owner and relatives of a certain house prospered greatly. Year by year those persons, on the second day of the new year, assembled and worshipped the god *Kannin Daimiyo-jin-san* — the meaning of the name in English is THE GREAT, BRIGHT GOD OF SELF-RESTRAINT. After engaging in worship, the head of the house opened the *Kannin-bako* (self-restraint box), and distributed to the needy money enough to enable them to live in comfort for a time. The money in the box was the annual accumulation of his offerings to his god. Outsiders, learning of the prosperity, worship, and large giving to the needy, which characterized this family, were astonished, and presented themselves to inquire into the matter. The master of the house, in reply, gave the following account of the practice of his household: "From ancient times, my family has believed in and worshipped 'the great, bright god of self-restraint.' We have also made a box, and called it 'the self-restraint box,' for the reception of the first-fruits and other percentages, all of which are offered to our god. As to percentages, this is our mode of proceeding: If I would buy a dollar garment, I manage by self-restraint and economy to get it for eighty cents, and the remaining twenty cents I drop into 'the self-restraint box'; or, if I would give a five-dollar feast to my friends, I exercise self-restraint and economy, and give it for four, dropping the remaining dollar into the box; or, if I determine to build a house that shall cost one hundred dollars, I exercise self-restraint and economy, and build it for eighty, putting the remaining twenty dollars into the box as an offering to *Kannin Daimiyo-jin-san* (the Great, Bright God of Self-Restraint). In proportion to my annual outlays, the sum in this box is large or small. This year my outlays have been large; hence, by the practice of the virtues named, the amount in 'the self-restraint box' is great. Yet, notwithstanding this, we are living in comfort, peace, and happiness." — *Missionary Herald*, Sept., 1883, quoted in Dr. Strong's *Our Country*.

GIFTS FROM THE HEART; ENTHUSIASTIC GIVING; SYSTEMATIC GIVING, — PROOFS OF LOYALTY TO GOD.

III. THE FREE GIFTS (vers. 22-29). OF EVERY KIND. EACH ACCORDING TO WHAT HE HAS. WORK, SKILL, JEWELS, MONEY, TIME.

Illustration. *Small Gifts from the Heart.* 1. The widow's mite. 2. Little Dorrit turned at the door to say "God bless you!" She said it very softly; but perhaps she may have been as audible above — who knows? — as a whole Cathedral choir. — *Charles Dickens*.

The value of giving, as a means of culture, of purer character, of enlarged sympathies, of broader views.

"Give strength, give thought, give deeds, give self,
Give love, give tears, and give thyself;
Give, give, be always giving.
Who gives not is not living.
The more we give, the more we live."

LESSON V.—JULY 29.

THE TABERNACLE.—Ex. 40: 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them.*—REV. 21: 3.

TIME.—The preparations for the tabernacle continued through the autumn and winter of B.C. 1491. The tabernacle was set up the following spring, the first day of Abib (called also Nisan), the latter part of March or early in April, B.C. 1490, one year after leaving Egypt.

PLACE.—The encampment in front of Mount Sinai.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS, *with fuller descriptions.* Tabernacle and its furniture (Ex. 25: 1 to 28: 43; 30: 1-21; 36: 1 to 39: 41). For the anointing (Ex. 29: 1-37; 30: 21-38. Lev. 8: 1-30). Explanations (Heb. 9: 1-28).

INTRODUCTION.

The autumn and winter following our last lesson were spent in preparing the gifts of the people for their use in the tabernacle. There was spinning and weaving, working upon wood, melting and hammering the silver and gold. All the various artificers were busy carrying out the plans Moses had received in the Mount. And now after six or eight months of preparation,—on the first day of the month which was the anniversary of their exodus from Egypt,—the great day came when the tabernacle was to be set up in its beauty and splendor.

1. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2. On the first day of the ¹first month shalt thou set^a up ²the tabernacle of the tent of the ^bcongregation.

Rev. Ver.: *a.* rear up; *b.* tent of meeting. ¹ Ex. 12: 2; 13: 4. ² Ex. 40: 17; 26: 1, 30.

EXPLANATORY.

2. On the first day of the first month: the month of Abib, afterwards called Nisan, covering parts of our March and April. This month was the beginning of their religious year. The tabernacle was set up on their New Year's Day.

I. The Tabernacle.—Ver. 2. **ITS NAME.** Tabernacle is from the Latin *tabernaculum*, a tent. The special Hebrew word applied to the structure is *Mishkan*, dwelling. It was a movable dwelling of Jehovah. **Tabernacle of the tent of the congregation:** rather, *the tabernacle, the tent of meeting.*

ITS DESIGN. The plan of the tabernacle and of its furniture was designed by God, and revealed to Moses on the Mount (Ex. chaps. 25-28; Heb. 8: 2). For it was intended to symbolize and teach the great truths of the Jewish religion; it was “an example and shadow” of heavenly and spiritual things (Heb. 8: 5). And no one but God could know what would best express the truths he wished to teach. A human mind would have been certain to be ignorant of or to misinterpret the truths. Says Parker, “Moses was no more left to settle the plan and the furniture than Noah was left to settle the colors of the rainbow.”

ITS STRUCTURE. The tabernacle was to comprise three main parts,—the *tabernacle* more strictly so-called, its *tent*, and its *covering* (chap. 35: 11; 39: 33, 34; 40: 19, 34. Num. 3: 25, etc.). These parts are very clearly distinguished in the Hebrew, but they are confounded in many places of the English version. The tabernacle itself was divided into two parts,—the *Holy Place* and the *Holy of Holies*. Around the whole was the court.

THE TENT was of goats' hair, the common material for tent coverings, and either plain black as usual, or dyed in bright colors. Its shape and general construction resembled those of other tents of the period. The necessary foundation was a framework of wood. This consisted of five “pillars,” or tent-poles, in front (26: 37), graduated in height to suit the slope of the roof, and doubtless five similar ones at the back, though these are not mentioned. A ridge-pole must have connected the two central tent-poles, and over this ridge-pole the cover of the tent, which was of goats' hair (26: 7), was no doubt strained in the

ordinary way by means of cords and "pins," or tent-pegs (35: 18). Thus an oblong square space was roofed over, which seems to have been sixty feet long by thirty broad. Within this "tent" (*'ohel*) was placed the "dwelling" (*mishkân*), the tabernacle proper. — *Rawlinson*.

THE COVERING was to be of red ram-skins and seal-skins (25: 5) (in the form of leather), and was spread over the goats'-hair tent as an additional protection against the weather. — *Cook*.

THE TABERNACLE PROPER. This was a structure of wood covered with gold, having two sides and a back, but without floor, roof, or front. The ground served for a floor. Its roof was a delicate tapestry of "violet, crimson blue, crimson, and white" underneath the goats'-hair tent, and the front was "an entrance curtain made of fine linen of pure white, embroidered with threads of violet, purple, crimson, and gold in a kind of checker-work."

The tabernacle was 30 cubits long and 10 wide and 10 high. If we reckon a cubit at 18 inches, this would give a length of 45 feet, and a width and height of 15 feet. The walls on three sides of this structure were made of 48 upright acacia planks 15 feet long and 27 inches wide, entirely overlaid with gold. On the lower end of each board were two tenons, each of which fitted into a solid silver socket. These sockets, 96 in number, weighed a talent each, or about 100 pounds avoirdupois, worth \$1648 each, or \$165,000 for the whole splendid foundation. This silver was obtained from a tax of half a shekel, or 30 cents, levied on each adult man. On each plank were several gold rings through which ran rods of gold-covered wood to hold the structure together.

THE HOLY PLACE was the room of the tabernacle nearest to the entrance, and was probably, judging from the proportions given in the description of the temple, 30 feet long and 15 feet wide. In this room were the golden candlestick, the altar of incense, and the table of shew-bread, and the priest entered it every day for service.

THE HOLY OF HOLIES, the second of the two rooms, was 15 feet square, separated by a veil from the Holy Place, and contained only the ark of the covenant with its mercy-seat and cherubim. Here was the peculiar dwelling-place of Jehovah, and it was entered only by the high priest once a year, with the most solemn ceremonies.

NOTE ON THE CUBIT. The cubit originally meant the length of the arm from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger; and hence as arms differed in length, the cubit was of different length in different places. It is usually regarded as 18 or 21 inches. Here we have given it as 18 inches.

TEACHINGS OF THE TABERNACLE. The Epistle to the Hebrews is the Holy Ghost's commentary on the tabernacle and its services. It is the key to the Pentateuch and to a great part of the Old Testament. Everything about the tabernacle pointed to Jesus Christ. — *Rodgers*. That which was intended to be set forth was what has often been styled "the plan of redemption." In other words, the Hebrew people were to be trained into Christianity, and familiarized with the essential ideas and principles of the Messianic scheme of salvation through this tent of worship in the desert. — *C. D. Helmer*.

1. The tabernacle symbolized the abiding presence of God with his people. He came and dwelt among them. It was fulfilled when "the word became flesh and dwelt" — literally, "tabernacled" — "among us." Jesus Christ is "Immanuel, God with us." The chief glory of the church is that God promises to dwell with men.

2. It taught us the way by which man may have access to God, as we shall see more fully later on. It was the place of light, of guidance, of worship, of communion with God.

3. It symbolized the holiness of God by the difficulty of approach through the court to the Holy Place, and the Holy Place to the Holy of Holies, in which were the tables of the perfect law and the mercy-seat of perfect love.

4. Its most costly and pure foundation pointed to Jesus Christ, the foundation of all true religion and worship.

5. The silver from which this foundation was made was the only thing connected with the tabernacle which was not a free gift of the people. This was assessed on all men alike to show that in the foundation, in God's love, in Jesus Christ its manifestation, all may claim an equal interest.

6. Everything most beautiful and most costly was used in the tabernacle, to express the esteem in which religion and religious institutions should be held in the nation. They should have the first place. They should be honored before the world. They should express our heart's worship and love. "A community which builds God's houses is never made poorer thereby." — *Bp. Simpson*.

7. Every common thing was transfigured by consecration to God, as the body is transfigured by the indwelling soul.

3. And ¹thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover ^e the ark with the vail.

Rev. Ver.: c. thou shalt screen.

¹ Ex. 40: 21; 26: 33. Num. 4: 5.

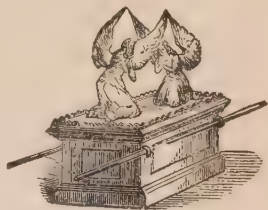
8. Each heart should be a tabernacle of the Holy Ghost. The heart is the glory of the man, and there God should dwell, in its holy of holies.

9. Each home should be a tabernacle where God abides, as Jesus in the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus; where God is worshipped and honored and loved.

10. Each church should be a tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, the centre of worship, the place of sacrifice, the means of making known the true God. "God glorifies the church by making it (1) a source of social refinement; (2) a centre of instruction; (3) by reaching the conscience; (4) by giving efficiency to his word; (5) by making it a place of edification and comfort; (6) by making it a source of inspiration to noble undertakings; (7) a gate of heaven."—*Bp. Simpson*.

11. The tabernacle with its services is a type of salvation through Jesus Christ.

II. **The Ark of the Testimony.**—Ver. 3. **And thou shalt put therein:** in the second room, or Holy of Holies. **The ark of the testimony.** This was a chest of acacia wood $2\frac{1}{2}$ cubits (3 feet 9 inches) in length and $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits (1 foot 3 inches) in height as well as width, plated within and without with gold. It was encircled with a band of solid gold, wrought into figures of leaves and flowers, and had at each corner a ring of solid gold. Through these rings passed bars of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, with which to carry the ark; and these bars were never taken out. The lid of the ark was of solid gold, and was called the mercy-seat. Upon it were two golden figures of winged cherubim, with their wings stretched out over the ark, and their faces turned toward one another. What these forms were, we do not know; but it is supposed that they were imaginary combinations of various animal forms (Ezek. 1: 5-14; Rev. 4: 6-8). Within the ark were deposited the two tables of stone engraved with the ten commandments (Deut. 10: 2), which were called "the tables of testimony" (chap. 31: 18), or simply "the testimony" (chap. 25: 16), because they testified of the character and will of God; whence the ark was sometimes called "the ark of the testimony" (according to Heb. 9: 4, the ark also contained Aaron's rod that budded, and a golden pot of manna). The ark was deposited in the Most Holy Place, and was the only furniture in the apartment. Before it hung the elegant embroidered vail, behind which none might pass or look, except once a year, on the day of atonement, when the high priest entered alone into the sacred apartment, to sprinkle the mercy-seat with the blood of atonement (see chap. 25: 10-21; 30: 10; Heb. 9: 3-5).—*Todd*. **Cover** (Rev. Ver. *screen*) the ark with the vail: the one just described, which was hung across the tabernacle and separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place.



ARK OF THE COVENANT.

TEACHINGS OF THE ARK. 1. The ark may be taken as symbolical of the Divine Presence, or the divine plan in human life. It was a visible form of an invisible power.—*Par-ker*. Here was the abiding-place of the symbol of the Divine Presence.

2. The law was placed in the ark to show that the centre and heart of all things is righteousness. On this God's throne is founded. According to righteousness he rules all things. The law is the very natural breath and atmosphere of heaven. When we have reached perfection, we do right as naturally as we live. Jesus Christ "puts his law in our hearts, and writes it upon our minds."

3. Over the law was the "mercy-seat or propitiatory; because Jehovah there revealed himself, especially on the great Day of Atonement, as 'God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin.' Nor was it without the profoundest allusion to the coming dispensation of the Gospel, that God's throne of mercy covered and hid the tables of the law."—*Smith*. For no one can reach righteousness except through the atoning mercy of God. And the law would be terrible to us who have broken it, did not the mercy-seat shelter us from its anathemas.

4. The cherubim symbolized the whole redeemed people of God, and God's abiding presence with them,—the law beneath, and themselves a very part of the mercy-seat.

5. The access to the ark—the perfect law, and the loving-kindness exhibited in redemp-

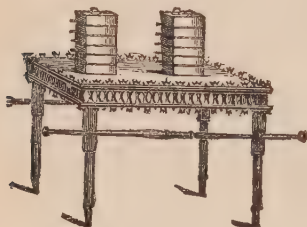
4. And ¹thou shalt bring in the table, and ²set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it; ³and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof.

¹ Ex. 40: 22; 26: 35.² Ex. 40: 23; 25: 30. Lev. 24: 5, 6.³ Ex. 40: 24, 25.

tion, and the shining and abiding presence of God—could be only through the altar of atoning sacrifice, the laver of purification, the altar of the incense of prayer, the light of God's word, the bread of life, and the veil of the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

6. Here in the ark, beside the law, we find Aaron's rod that budded,—the symbol of life from the dead, the resurrection and the life,—and the golden pot of manna, symbol of the bread of life.

III. The Table of Shew-Bread.—Ver. 4. And thou shalt bring in the table: of shew-bread. It was placed on the north side of the Holy Place (the tabernacle facing the east). It was 2 cubits (3 feet) long, and 1 cubit (18 inches) wide, and 1½ cubits (2 feet 3 inches) high, and was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Around its edge ran a



SHEW-BREAD.

band of solid gold wrought into figures, like that upon the ark; and at some distance beneath it was a strip of plated acacia wood, bearing another similar band of wrought gold. Like the ark, the table was furnished with golden rings at the corners, and bars of plated acacia wood for carrying it.—*Todd*. (See description in Ex. 25: 23-30; Lev. 24: 5-9.) The things that are to be set in order upon it. The table was furnished with two vessels for bread, two for frankincense (spoons of 25: 29), and probably two for wine ("covers and bowls" of 25: 29, for the drink offering which always accompanied the meat offering), all of gold. Upon the two platters were twelve loaves of bread, six upon each, piled one above another, representing the

twelve tribes; and on the top of each pile was a small saucer of frankincense. The bread was renewed every Sabbath, the stale loaves being eaten by the priests upon the spot.—*Todd*.

TEACHINGS OF THE TABLE OF SHEW-BREAD. 1. This bread represents Christ, "the living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6: 51). No one can be healthy and strong who does not get good food; and no soul can be truly healthy that does not feed on Jesus Christ. To eat a book is to consider it well; and to eat the flesh and to drink the blood of Christ is to consider him with faith and love; it is to receive him into the heart.—*George Rodgers*.

2. This particular piece of furniture seems to indicate especially the idea of a *home*, the abode of a family. And it signifies that God, who thus reveals himself at the mercy-seat, intends to furnish in his gracious presence a home for his people, who are his children. A table is spread perpetually for their nourishment and entertainment. Nor can we fail to perceive in this shew-bread table a shadow of that spiritual feast which our Lord appointed to be a permanent ordinance in his church. The Lord's Supper is a family gathering in the divine home, furnishing and signifying the delights we have here, and shall more abundantly have hereafter in the presence of our Father, the eternal feast of heaven.—*Rev. C. D. Helmer*.

IV. The Golden Candlestick.—Ver. 4. And thou shalt bring in the candlestick: rather, lamp-stand or chandelier. (For description, see Ex. 25: 31-39.) The golden candlestick, like the table of shew-bread, was represented on the Arch of Titus, and the careful copy made under the direction of Reland in 1710, and published in his work, *De Spoliis Templi*, gives probably the best idea that can be formed of it. It was composed of a straight stem, rising perpendicularly from a base, and having on either side of it three curved arms or branches, all of them in the same plane, and all rising to the same level. The stem and arms were ornamented with representations of almond flowers, pomegranates, and lily blossoms, repeated as there was room for them, the top ornament being in every case a lily blossom, which held a hemispherical lamp.—*Rawlinson*. It was made of a talent of pure gold,



GOLDEN CANDLESICK.

5. ¹ And thou shalt set the altar ^d of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging ^e of the door to the tabernacle.

6. And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent ^g of the congregation.

Rev. Ver.: *d.* the golden altar; *e.* screen; *g.* tent of meeting.

¹ Ex. 40: 26.

which, at £4 an ounce, would be worth \$28,000. It stood opposite the table of shew-bread, on the left, or south, side of the apartment. **And light the lamps thereof.** Upon the seven lamp-stands were seven golden lamps; the ancient lamp being simply a bowl, not unlike a gravy-boat in shape, with the wick hanging over the spout. — *Todd*. The lamps were lighted at the time of the evening oblation (27: 20, 21). They are directed to be kept burning perpetually; but from their being lighted in the evening, this seems to mean only during the night. The rabbis say that the central lamp only was alight in the daytime. — *Smith*.

TEACHINGS OF THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK. 1. There was no window in the tabernacle. All natural light was excluded from the room in which the priests ministered. They lived and walked in the light, when darkness brooded over the desert outside; but it was not the light of the sun, but of the candlestick, which represented the light of God. God in Christ is the light of the world.

2. Christ and the church are both seen here. The base and stock, or main pillar, represent Christ. The branches represent the church. — *Rodgers*. There was only one lamp-stand, denoting the unity of God's people; but it had various branches and lamps, denoting their multiplicity in unity; and the number was seven, the symbol of their completeness. — *Johnson*.

3. Would not the lamps that burned during the darkness seem to say to every troubled soul that God never slumbered nor slept, that at all times he is waiting to listen to the prayers of his people? — *Dale*.

4. Hospitality, festivity, good cheer, require light in a home. God's house must be radiant because of the Divine Presence; "for he is light." — *Helmer*.

5. Each heart should be a "candle of the Lord," lighted by him; burning continually, because continually fed from the beaten oil of the sanctuary; shining in the dark places; of pure, solid gold, true, incorruptible, sincere all through.

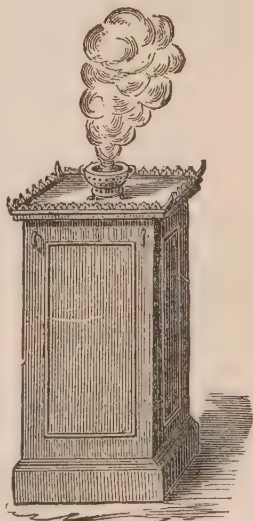
V. The Golden Altar of Incense. — Ver. 5. **Thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense.** This was in the form of a box, a foot and a half square, and three feet high, with a projection like a horn at each upper corner. It was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. This altar stood at the inner end of the Holy Place, just before the inner veil, and therefore just before the mercy-seat behind the veil. Upon it the priests burned incense at the time of morning and evening prayer. The incense was burned, not directly upon the altar, but in a censer which was set upon the altar, the censer being a shallow pan of gold, hung from chains of gold which were held in the hand. — *Todd*. **The hanging of the door:** *i.e.*, the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle (chaps. 26: 36, 36: 37, etc.). This veil was suspended on five pillars, overlaid with gold, at the east end of the sanctuary; and though of the same rich material with the inner veil, yet it seems to have been less highly ornamented. — *Bush*.

TEACHINGS OF THE ALTAR OF INCENSE. 1. This altar is a beautiful and instructive type of Christ, our great Intercessor, the incense of whose prayers burned continually. — *Randall*.

2. *The incense* was a type of the prayers and worship of God's people, kindled by the flame of the Holy Spirit, going up in sweet odors to heaven, from a pure and true heart. When the priests offered incense, the people were accustomed to pray (see Luke 1: 9, 10).

3. We cannot reach this altar whence true prayer arises, except by the altar of atoning sacrifice, and the laver of purification, and by the light of the golden candlestick.

VI. The Altar of Burnt Offering. — Ver. 6. The altar of the burnt offering



ALTAR OF INCENSE.

7. And ¹thou shalt set the laver between the tent^a of the congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein.

8. And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the hanging^t at the court gate.

9. And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and ²anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels^k thereof: and it shall be holy.

Rev. Ver.: *t.* tent of meeting; *s.* screen; *f.* furniture.

¹ Ex. 40: 30; 30: 18.

² Ex. 30: 26.

before the door of the tabernacle. This was often called the brazen altar, because it was covered with bronze, or rather, copper. It measured seven and one-half feet in length and breadth, and was four and one-half feet high. Its acacia frame was overlaid with copper, and ornamental work of the same metal rose two feet from the ground, all around, to keep the feet or clothes of the officiating priests from touching it. The hollow interior was apparently filled with earth, smoothed on the top like a hearth. All its furniture was made of copper. — *Geikie*. On it were burnt the whole burnt-offerings, and all those parts of the other animal sacrifices which were offered to the Lord. — *S. Clark*.

TEACHINGS. This altar symbolized the atoning sacrifice of Christ. It stood before the tabernacle, to teach us that no one can enter the holy place of heaven and the heavenly life, no one can reach God, and dwell in his abiding presence, except by the sacrifice of Jesus, to whom all the sacrifices pointed (see Heb. 9: 11-14; 10: 1-9). Its benefits extended to all. None but priests could enter the tabernacle, but all had access to this altar.

VII. **The Brazen Laver.** — Ver. 7. The laver between the tent and the altar. This was a large copper vessel standing upon a pedestal, the whole resembling a huge vase. It was filled with water for the use of the priests, who washed their hands and feet, not in it, but in water drawn from it, every time they set foot within the tabernacle. The laver was made of the mirrors of the women, whose devotion appears in this surrender of the most indispensable article of feminine toilet. These mirrors were made of copper, with a slight admixture of tin, and highly burnished (see Exod. 30: 17-21; 38: 8). — *Todd*.

TEACHINGS. 1. This water for washing signifies the moral cleanliness required of all who will come into the presence of God. — *Helmer*. We first need pardon to save us from the punishment of sin, and then sanctification to fit us for the society of holy beings. — *Randall*. The water was (1) abundant, (2) pure; (3) water is universal; (4) it is mighty in its operation. — *R. Newton*.

2. The mirrors were transformed into a means of purity. The common things can be made of use in the house of God. Nothing is ever to be turned away from the church except that which is impure, untrue, vicious, mean, debasing. Everything else is to be consecrated. — *Parker*.

VIII. **The Court of the Tabernacle.** — Ver. 8. Set up the court round about: that is, the curtain enclosing the court. The court was 150 feet long and 75 feet wide, having the tabernacle in the middle of its western, or back, end. The screen around it was made of plain white linen, and was 7½ feet high. This curtain was suspended by hooks upon pillars of acacia wood which stood in sockets of copper. Their capitals were overlaid with silver, and were connected by silver rods. At the eastern, or front, end of the court, the curtain was dispensed with for a space of 30 feet in the middle of the end, and its place was supplied with a finer curtain, embroidered with colors and gold, which hung over, and when dropped, closed, the entrance to the court. — *Todd*. Hang up the hanging: rather, hang up the entrance-curtain.

TEACHINGS. The court signifies the separation of God's people from the world, for no Gentile could enter this court; and also the preparation needed before entering into the sacred mysteries of religion. There can be no sudden leap from worldliness into the highest experiences of God's love and truth. These various barriers are not so much barriers as golden stairways. We cannot reach the goal without climbing; but the stairway is not to hinder, but to aid, our climbing.

IX. **The Dedication of the Tabernacle.** — Vers. 9-11. 9. And thou shalt take. The instructions for this anointing had been previously given in 30: 26-31, and are repeated here, although their execution appears to have been delayed to a later date (see Lev. 8: 1-13). Moses perhaps found that there was not time for the completion of the ceremony on the day of the erection of the tabernacle, and therefore deferred a part of it.

10. And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his¹ vessels, and sanctify the altar: and ¹it^m shall be an altar most holy.

11. And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot,ⁿ and sanctify it.

12. ²And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle^o of the congregation, and wash them with water.

13. And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments,³ and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

14. And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe^p them with coats:

15. And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they

Rev. Ver.: *l.* its; *m.* and the altar shall be most holy; *n.* base; *o.* tent of meeting; *p.* and put coats upon them. ¹ Ex. 29: 36, 37. ² Lev. 8: 1-13. ³ Ex. 28: 41.

—*Rawlinson.* The anointing oil: was a fragrant compound of olive oil, myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, and cassia, and was to be used only for holy anointing (Ex. 20: 23-30). **And it shall be holy:** *i.e.*, set apart exclusively for sacred uses.

TEACHINGS. 1. Some things should be set apart exclusively for religious purposes; some days, as the Sabbath; some hours, as the hour of prayer; some money, as gifts to God's cause; some places, as the church.

2. By this setting apart, the people were taught the meaning of holiness, consecration, setting apart for God; and by contrast, the nature of sin.

3. This setting apart is to teach that all things really are holy, and should be consecrated to God. The fragrance from these holy things is to perfume all things. The Sabbath blessing tests all the week. "Every place is hallowed ground."

"Oh friend, we need not rock nor sand
Nor stoned stream of morning land;
The heavens are glassed in Merrimack,
What more could Jordan render back?"

"Our common daily life divine
And every land a Palestine."
"God's love and blessing then and there
Are now and here, and everywhere."
Whittier.

X. The Dedication of the Priests.—Vers. 12-16. 12. And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons. See chap. 29; Lev. 8. To consecrate and set them apart to the priest's office.—*Bush.* Hitherto there had been no regular priesthood, but the patriarchal system had been preserved, under which every man was priest of his own household; but now the priesthood was conferred by divine direction upon Aaron and his male posterity, the head of the family being always the high priest (28: 1).—*Todd.*

(1) PURIFICATION. **Wash them with water:** bathing the entire body. He that would serve God must first be made pure himself, "by the washing of regeneration and the sanctification of the Holy Spirit" (see 2 Cor. 7: 1).

(2) THE HOLY GARMENTS. 13. Put upon Aaron the holy garments. The garments of the high priest were under-garments of white linen; a long dress, or tunic, reaching from the neck to the feet, embroidered with colors and gold, and bound around the waist with a similarly embroidered girdle; an outer tunic reaching to the knees, called the robe of the ephod, woven of blue, with merely openings for the neck and arms, and with a fringe at the lower edge of golden bells alternating with colored pomegranates; the ephod (see last lesson on ver. 27); and for the head, an embroidered cap, having upon its band, over the forehead, a gold plate inscribed with the words, "Holiness unto the Lord," which was attached by means of blue lace. The garments of the subordinate priests were similar, but without the ephod and its robe, and without the golden plate on the head. See chap. 28.—*Todd.*

14. Coats: tunics, or long skirts, of linen. See above. So God's saints are clothed in white raiment (white including all beautiful colors) and in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Garments of salvation.

(3) ANOINTING. 15. And thou shalt anoint them: setting them apart for holy and



HIGH PRIEST.

may minister unto me in the priest's office : for their anointing shall^a surely be¹ an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.

16. Thus did Moses : according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he.

Rev. Ver.: *g.* shall be to them. ¹ Num. 25: 13.

special service of God. They were to perform the necessary work of the tabernacle and the sacrifices, to lead the people in regular daily and weekly worship, and to teach them the statutes of the Lord. **An everlasting priesthood.** The meaning is, that the priesthood should descend from one generation to another perpetually. — *Todd.* And the efficacy of this first anointing should extend to the whole future line, so that they need not from one generation to another receive successively the consecrating unction. With the high priest the case was different. As he was elected, it was fit that he should, upon entering into office, be anointed. — *Bush.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Rev. D. A. Randall's *The Wonderful Tent*; Dr. Richard Newton's *The Jewish Tabernacle*; *Monday Club Sermons* for 1881; Edersheim's *The Temple and its Services*, chaps. 4-6; William M. Taylor's *Moses the Lawgiver*, chap. 14; Fairbairn's *Typology of Scripture*; Dr. Gordon's *Christ in the Old Testament*; Hamilton's *Moses the Man of God*, chap. 18; Bp. Simpson's *Sermons*, p. 209, "God's dwelling in his Church"; George Rodger's *The Gospel according to Moses*; Edersheim's *Exodus and the Wanderings*, p. 123. The construction of the tabernacle is well described in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, article "Temple," copied in the *Bible Commentary*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

CONNECT this lesson naturally with the last, and the months of preparation.

READ the fuller descriptions in connection with the summary given in the lesson.

SUBJECT, — THE WAY OF SALVATION ILLUSTRATED.

The whole lesson is a Divine Illustration, and it will not be easy to find a better way of teaching this lesson than to follow out the natural course of the text, as is done in the *Explanatory*.

Illustration. As the pictures in a camera-obscura are the exact representation of the things without, and yet are only shadow-pictures, and not the reality; so the tabernacle, its furniture and services, are the pictures and representations of the salvation that came through Jesus Christ. They are both one thing, in perfect harmony, — only the Old Testament is the picture, and the New Testament the reality. With the picture of the tabernacle teachers can lead their classes from one point to another, showing the beginning and progress of holiness. (1) *The tabernacle, the house of God*, its construction and meaning. (2) *The ark of testimony*, with its teachings. (3) *The brazen altar of sacrifice*, before we enter the tabernacle; so only by the sacrifice of Christ we can begin a holy life. (4) *The laver*, still outside, showing the need of cleansing, the washing of regeneration. Expressed in baptism. (5) We enter the *holy place, the church on earth*, and find the *candlestick*, the light of God's word. (6) *The table of shew-bread*, signifying communion with God, — the Lord's Supper. (7) *The altar of incense*, typifying prayer. (8) *The anointing*, vers. 9, 15, the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. (9) All this leads to *the Holy of Holies*, perfect holiness, — heaven, with the mercy-seat, and holding the tables of the law, the expression of a holy nature.

LESSON VI. — AUGUST 5.

THE BURNT OFFERING. — LEV. I : 1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* — ISA. 53: 6.

TIME. — April-May, B.C. 1490. The tabernacle was set up the first day of the first month (Abib), during the last half of March, of the second year of the Exodus. The sacrifices were arranged probably during the fifty days which followed; for the people left Sinai on the 20th of the second month (some time in May) (Num. 10: 11).

PLACE.—The valley Er Râhah, before Mount Sinai.

LEVITICUS.—NAMED from the Levites, who had charge of the ceremonials described in the book. **AUTHOR:** probably Moses, like the other books of the Pentateuch. **OBJECT:** it was the book of service, setting forth the way of access to God, and the methods of worship, as well as many civil laws, which, rightly understood, are religious. **MODE:** these precepts were probably given from the Divine Presence over the mercy-seat in the Holy of Holies. **DIVISIONS.** Part I. (chaps. 1-16) "tells Israel how to approach God so as to have communion with him, by various sacrifices." Part II. (chaps. 17-25) describes in a symbolical manner, the holiness "that becometh the people of God,"—personal holiness, holiness in the family, holiness in social relations, holiness of the land.

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT.—Rom. 12: 1—a living sacrifice. Heb. 7: 26-28; 9: 11-14, 28; 10: 10-16—Christ our sacrifice. Matt. 20: 28; 26: 28; John 3: 14, 15; Rom. 3: 25; 5: 8-11; 1 Cor. 15: 3; 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19; 1 John 1: 7—the atonement. Read also Isa. 53.

INTRODUCTION.

The Book of Exodus closed with the account of the setting up of the tabernacle, which we studied in our last lesson. It was a fitting close, for it completed the exodus. The people were now ready to be a nation, with God for a leader, and his worship for the central binding principle. We now turn to the third Book of the Bible, wherein are given from the tabernacle the laws and ceremonials of worship, and other principles of true religious living. One of the most instructive of these ceremonials we study to-day.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The System of Sacrifices.—**ORIGIN OF SACRIFICES.** Authorities are divided on the subject of the origin of sacrifices. Some think that they originated in divine appointment; and others think that they had their origin in human impulses and feelings, superstitious, ignorant, and mistaken, yet having a basis of truth, and that it pleased God to adopt and regulate the institution, so as to make it shadow forth and teach great spiritual truth, and prepare the way for better things to come.—*Todd.*

The sacrifices of the Jews may be divided into two general classes.

FIRST CLASS, — SACRIFICES OF EXPIATION OR ATONEMENT. (1) The whole-burnt offering, expressing atonement and dedication; (2) the sin offering, for the general sinfulness of our nature, breaking out in various ways; (3) the trespass offering, for particular sins; (4) the regular daily offering (a whole-burnt offering) for the people as a whole; (5) occasional offerings; (6) national offerings; (7) voluntary offerings by individuals.

THE TEACHINGS of these offerings were (1) to express the consciousness of sin; (2) the deadly nature of sin; (3) the need of atonement (God's justice); (4) the cost of forgiveness, and through this the holiness and the love of God; (5) dedication of ourselves to God; and hence, (6) the blood covenant of eternal friendship and loyalty. These will be considered below.

SECOND CLASS, — SACRIFICES OF THANKSGIVING. The peace offerings, which were usually food and drink offerings, and animal sacrifices, parts of the animal being burned to express expiation, parts eaten by the priests, and parts eaten by the offerer of the sacrifice and his friends, in social communion with one another and with God.

TEACHING. These sacrifices expressed (1) gratitude to God; (2) consecration to God; (3) communion with God; (4) mutual love and friendship as between children of God; (5) and they were accompanied by the expiatory sacrifices to remind the people that only through atonement and forgiveness could these blessings be enjoyed, or this communion attained.

THE METHOD of many of these sacrifices contained in it peculiar advantages, not perhaps usually recognized by the people, but none the less valuable. The *daily sacrifices* attracted the people around one centre where these sacrifices were offered. They all had one God, one ritual, one religious home; they were brothers and sisters, one family, one nation. Many of the other sacrifices were offered only at this centre. This brought the people away from their daily toil to great religious meetings. (Great gatherings for religion are no novelty.) It gave them all *vacations* two or three times a year. (Vacations are no modern innovations.) Servants, laborers, and all had these vacations. The minds and souls of the people were broadened, enlarged. They were called out of themselves and the routine

1. And the LORD ¹called unto Moses, and spake unto him ²out of the tabernacle ^a of the congregation, saying,

2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, ³If ^b any man of you bring ^c an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring ^d your offering of the cattle, *even of the herd, and of the flock.*

3. If his offering ^e be a burnt sacrifice ^f of the herd, let him offer a male ⁴without blemish: he shall offer it of ^h his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD.

Rev. Ver.: *a*, tent of meeting; *b*, when; *c*, offereth an oblation; *d*, offer your oblation; *e*, oblation; *f*, offering; *h*, offer it at the door of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. ¹ Ex. 19: 3. ² Ex. 40: 34, 35. Num. 12: 4, 5. ³ Lev. 22: 18, 19. ⁴ Ex. 12: 5. Deut. 15: 21. Mal. 1: 14. Eph. 5: 27. Heb. 9: 14. 1 Pet. 1: 19.

of daily labor. They were compelled to look up and look around. All this well paid them for the expense of such journeys and meetings. — *P.*

II. **The Burnt Offering.** — Vers. 1-9. This lesson describes, not the whole class of burnt offerings, but only one kind, that voluntarily presented.

THE OFFERING. 1. And the Lord (*Jehovah*) called unto Moses, and spake unto him. The manner in which God ordinarily communicated with a prophet was by "a vision" or "in a dream"; but this was not the case with Moses; "My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house; with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently" (Num. 12: 8). The Levitical code of laws, therefore, was delivered to Moses in his ordinary mental state, not in trance, or dream, or ecstasy. — *Pulpit Com.* Out of the tabernacle of the congregation. The tabernacle had just been set up by Moses (Ex. 40: 16). Hitherto God had spoken from the Mount (or the previous "tent of meeting." — *Murphy*); now he speaks from the mercy-seat of the ark in the tabernacle. He had symbolically drawn near to his people, and the sacrificial system is now instituted as the means by which they should draw nigh to him. — *Pulpit Com.*

2. Speak unto the children of Israel. It is important to observe that these first instructions (1: 2 to 3: 17) are addressed expressly to the individual who felt the need of sacrifice on his own account. — *Cook.* This was a *voluntary* offering on the part of the worshipper, but the mode of doing it was in every point defined by the law. Such acts of sacrifice are to be distinguished from the public offerings, and those ordained for individuals on special occasions, which belonged to the religious education of the nation. — *Cook.* An offering unto the Lord. It is to be remembered that the original term thus rendered throughout the book, is *Jehovah*, the self-existent Author of all things and events, and hence the Performer of promise and the Keeper of covenant. — *Murphy.*

THE OFFERING. Ye shall bring your offering of the cattle . . . herd . . . flock: *i.e.*, those animals that were not only tame, innocent, and gentle, but useful and adapted for food. This rule excluded horses, dogs, swine, camels, and asses (which were used in sacrifice by some heathen nations), beasts and birds of prey, as also hares and deer. — *J., F. and B.* In case of poverty the offering might be of turtle doves or young pigeons (Lev. 1: 14). Three conditions met in the sacrificial quadrupeds: (1) they were clean according to the law; (2) they were commonly used as food, and, being domesticated, (3) they formed a part of the home wealth of the sacrificers. — *Cook.*

TEACHINGS. 1. Separation from the ungodly. By this means the Jews were undoubtedly excluded from partaking in the feasts of the heathen around, who ate those animals which were forbidden to them. — *Walker.* 2. An expression of devotion by giving something valuable. It was a first principle, that every sacrifice must be of such things as had belonged to the offerer. None other could represent him or take his place before God. — *Edersheim.* 3. They were also the fittest representations both of Christ and of true Christians, as being gentle and harmless and patient and most useful to men. 4. They were also so common that men might never want a sacrifice when they needed, or God required it. — *Poole.*

3. A burnt sacrifice. The original term for *burnt* offering (*olâh*) comes from a root which signifies to ascend. It is so called because it was laid whole on the altar, and then, with the exception of the skin, being consumed by fire, the greatest part of it *ascended towards heaven.* — *Bush.* Let him offer a male without blemish: *i.e.*, having neither deformity, defect, nor superfluity of members, and free from distemper. He shall offer it of his own voluntary will: thus expressing what was in his heart, and showing his

4. ¹And he shall put ⁱhis hand upon the head of the burnt offering; ²and it shall be ²accepted for him ³to make atonement for him.

5. And he shall kill the ⁴bullock before the LORD: ⁵and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, ⁶and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that *is by* the door of the tabernacle ⁷of the congregation.

Rev. Ver.: *z*. lay; *k*. tent of meeting. ¹ Ex. 29: 10, 15, 19. Lev. 8: 14, 22; 16: 21. ² Lev. 22: 21, 27. Isa. 56: 7. Rom. 12: 1. Phil. 4: 18. ³ Lev. 4: 20, 26, 31, 35. Num. 15: 25. Rom. 5: 11. ⁴ Mic. 6: 6. ⁵ 2 Chron. 35: 11. Heb. 10: 11. ⁶ Lev. 3: 8. Heb. 12: 24. ⁷ 1 Pet. 1: 2.

understanding of the sacrifice, and his acceptance of its teachings. **At the door of the tabernacle.** The place denoted is that part of the court which was in front of the tabernacle, in which stood the brazen altar and the laver, and where alone sacrifices could be offered. — *Cook*. **Before the Lord** (Rev. Ver., *that he may be accepted before the Lord*): only the perfect victim could be accepted. Blemishes showed a wrong heart in the offerer, and such an offering must be rejected.

TEACHINGS. 1. The main idea of the burnt offering was consecration to God's service as the necessary condition of approaching him; also including the idea of expiation, without which sinful men might not draw near to God at all. — *Frederic Gardiner*. "You have given the donation; now give the donor." — *Parker*. The dedication is the main act of the worshipper expressed by the general term offering. Such dedication implies regeneration, faith, and all that revival of right feeling in the heart of the sinner towards his merciful God, which is involved in a right approach to him. Let us carefully distinguish here. In the burnt sacrifice we have on *the part of the offerer*, penitence and trust; on *the part of the Mediator*, expiation and propitiation; and on the part of the Acceptor, pardon and acceptance. — *Murphy*. 2. The voluntary presenting of the victim at the entrance of the tabernacle was a symbol of the free will submitting itself to the law of the Lord. — *Cook*. 3. That the victim must be without blemish was a prefiguration of the perfect excellence of the sacrifice of Christ, who was "a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1: 19). 4. It was doubtless designed to intimate that we are to offer to God the best of all we have, — the best of our time and strength, the vigor of our days, and the utmost of our talents. What a man soweth, that shall he reap. Niggardly and unwilling gifts, weary and distasteful services, hasty and perturbed devotions, will find no more acceptance than the Israelite's blemished ox. — *Bush*.

4. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering. This was a significant act, implying that he not only devoted the animal to God, but confessing and conscious of his sin, he prayed that his guilt and punishment might be transferred to the victim whose life was now offered in place of his own. — *D. A. Randall*. Hence it was always accompanied by confession of sin, and prayer. It was to be done "with one's whole force"; as it were, to lay one's whole weight upon the substitute. It was at this point the sacrifice was slain. — *Edersheim*. And it shall be accepted for him to make atonement (literally, *covering*) for him. It is not the sin that is covered, but the sinner. Owing to his sin, the latter is exposed to the wrath of a just God, but something intervenes whereby he is covered, and he ceases, therefore, to attract the divine punishment. The covering provided by a sacrifice is the blood or life of an animal, symbolically representing the offerer's own life freely surrendered by him *for his acceptance*, and typically foreshadowing the blood of Christ. — *Pulpit Com.*

TEACHINGS. It is not at all probable that the Israelites understood the full meaning of this service, nor *how* the sacrifice could avail to atone for their sins. But with all its mystery it helped to educate the people (1) into a deeper consciousness of their sinfulness and imperfection, how far off they were from what God had made them to be. As Professor Peabody says, "There is between the deserts even of the penitent and believing soul, and the pardon and blessedness for which it hopes, an immeasurable distance, an impassable chasm which can be spanned and filled in only by the mercy of God as revealed and manifested in Christ." Thus the people were led up out of sin, to a knowledge of the love and mercy of God, and the duty of devoting themselves wholly to him. See 51st Psalm. (2) As this sacrifice was for general sinfulness, and not for any particular sin, it led the thoughts to an earnest desire to escape from sinful nature, to a holy heart and life. (3) It is necessary to own and accept the sacrifice and its teachings, in order that it may avail us, and be pleasing to God.

5. He shall kill the bullock. This was performed, in the case of private sacrifices,

6. And he shall flay the burnt-offering, and cut it into his¹ pieces.

7. And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and ¹lay the wood in order upon the fire.

8. And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts,^m the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that *is* on the fire which *is* upon the altar.

9. But hisⁿ inwards and hisⁿ legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, *to be* a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a ²sweet savor unto the LORD.

Rev. Ver.: *l.* its; *m.* pieces; *n.* its.

¹ Gen. 22: 9.

² Gen. 8: 21.

Ezek. 20: 28, 41.

2 Cor. 2: 15.

Eph. 5: 2. Phil. 4: 18.

by the offerer himself, and by the priests and Levites in that of the national and festal offerings — *Keil*. **Before the Lord:** *i.e.*, in immediate view of the place where his presence was especially manifested. — *Lange*. Sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar. The word translated *sprinkle* here means rather *to throw* or *fling*. The meaning is, not that some of the blood was to be sprinkled upon the altar, but that the whole of the blood was to be dashed all over the altar. — *Todd*.

TEACHINGS. 1. We are left in no doubt as to the sacrificial meaning of the blood. As the material vehicle of the life of the victim, it was the symbol of the life of the offerer. The blood is the symbol of the spiritual life which is given up to Jehovah. That it must be poured out on the altar before the burnt offering can be kindled tells us plainly that no offering up of life or body is profitable unless the soul has first been given to Jehovah. — *Lange*. You say you object to the term *blood*, of which the Bible is so full. What do you mean by that term? There is your mistake. What, then, does the shedding of blood signify? *Death*? No. It signifies the giving of *life*. This is a symbolic act, and the meaning is, we pour out our life in one libation of love. It is thine, thou Giver of all existence. The man standing over the red stream is saying: Lord, this is what I would daily do, give back the life to the Life-giver; have no life of my own, except as it is re-given me by the God to whom I dedicate it. — *Joseph Parker*. 2. The Israelites were by this rite most impressively taught that without the shedding of blood there was no remission of sins. We know that the blood of all the animals shed at the altar of burnt offering owed all its excellency to its being a type of that blood of Jesus by which he hath obtained eternal redemption for us. — *Bush*. If one examines the original sources from which our heedless popular language respecting the washing away of sins has been borrowed, he will find that the fountain in which sins are indeed to be washed away, is that of love and agony. — *Ruskin*. The death of Christ expresses the measure of his love.

6. **He shall flay (skin) the burnt offering.** The offerer skinned the animal, and the skin belonged to the officiating priest. **Cut it into his pieces:** *i.e.*, properly divide it according to custom. It was cut in pieces, signifying the laying-open to the eye of God of the inmost being of the offerer (Heb. 4: 12, 13). — *Smith*.

7. **Shall put fire upon the altar:** that is, stir or rouse the fuel; for the fire made use of there descended from heaven (9: 24), and all other fire was prohibited (10: 1). — *J., F. and B.*

8. **Lay the parts . . . in order.** The parts of the victim were then salted by the priest, in conformity with the rule (2: 13; Ezek. 43: 24; Mark 9: 49), and placed "in order" upon the wood; *i.e.*, in the same relation to each other that they had in the living animal. — *Cook*. Everything about the sacrifice must have that method and regard to propriety becoming in an act of worship. — *Gardiner*.

9. **To be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire.** There is no tautology in the original, which might be rendered, "an offering sent upwards, a sacrifice made by fire." — *Cook*. **Of a sweet savor unto the Lord.** As we delight in sweet odors, so he calls the sacrifice made according to the law a sweet savor; *i.e.*, it was pleasing to God.

TEACHINGS. 1. What does the burning symbolize? Destruction of the flesh. Fire is the true and never-failing disinfectant. Chemists have devised many disinfectants; but fire never fails. What does that smoking heap mean? It means that all about me that is fleshy, impure, earthly, unworthy, is being consumed. This is the divine sanitation: the life given, and the mean part handed over to the fire to be turned into aspiration — the only form in which the flesh can pray. — *Joseph Parker*. 2. No one can imagine that the smell of burnt bones and flesh is pleasing to God. It is the spirit which the sacrificer shows, the truths

which the victim illustrates, the blessings which are symbolized,—these are the sweet savor to God. So it was not the pains which Christ suffered, but the love which the suffering expressed, which was well pleasing to God.

III. **New Testament Light on Old Testament Themes.** (I.) We should offer ourselves a living sacrifice well pleasing to God (Rom. 12: 1).

(II.) **THE ATONEMENT.** All these sacrifices were a preparation for and a type of the great atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross (1 John 2: 2; 4: 10; Matt. 26: 28). It is not probable that the Jews saw clearly the meaning of the system of sacrifices, but they knew it was God's way of saving them from sin, and that it had a full and perfect meaning and reason in God's mind, and they could trust even when they could not see.

The sacrifice of Jesus was **VOLUNTARY** (John 10: 17, 18; 1 Tim. 2: 6). He was not forced to suffer for men; he *chose* to give his life for them.

The sacrifice was **PERFECT**, without blemish. No sin was found in him (Heb. 7: 26; 1 Pet. 1: 19).

THE NEED OF ATONEMENT is seen (Rom. 3: 23-26). No man *can* forgive the sins he has committed against God. Only the one sinned against can forgive the sin.

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST is often referred to (Matt. 26: 28; Heb. 9: 13, 14). The blood is the life (Gen. 9: 4). Jesus gave his life for us. The **BURNING** of the sacrifice expresses the sufferings of Christ for us. And both these are the **EXPRESSIONS OF GOD'S LOVE** (John 3: 16; 1 John 4: 10). They are as a measure to us of how much God loves us. The divine Jesus was willing to pour out his life for us, to suffer agonies on the cross, that we might be saved. What we are willing to do and to suffer for another is the manifest measure of our love.

We must **ACCEPT THE SACRIFICE** to make it of value to ourselves (John 3: 14, 15; Rom. 1: 16).

“My faith would lay her hand on that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand, and there confess my sin.”

The sacrifice of Christ brings **HOLINESS AND SALVATION** (1 Pet. 2: 24; 3: 18; Gal. 2: 20; 1 John 1: 7; Rom. 5: 8, 9; Gal. 5: 16; Eph. 2: 13; Heb. 13: 20, 21).

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Walker's *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*, chap. 7; Edersheim's *Temple and its Services*, chaps. 5, 6, 8; Dale's *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, pp. 186-214; Fairbairn's *Typology*; Abbott's *Cyclopaedia* on “Offerings and Sacrifices”; Miss Smiley's work on *Offerings*; Professor Park on *The Atonement*; R. W. Dale on *The Atonement*; Foster's *Cyclopaedia of Illustrations*, 224-232, 432-439, 5151-5154; Bertram's *Homiletical Cyclopaedia*, 3453, 3644.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

A **BRIEF CONNECTION** between this lesson and the last. The Book of Leviticus.

SUBJECT,—THE WAY TO HOLINESS AND GOD.

I. **GOD HIMSELF REVEALS THE WAY** (ver. 1). Human wisdom unable to discover the way to holiness, heaven, and God. It comes from the direct revelation of God; and is a marvel of wisdom and love.

II. **THE BURNT OFFERING, OPENING THE WAY BY ATONING SACRIFICE** (vers. 2, 3). The nature and teaching of this offering. Include in the view the whole system of sacrifices ordained of God, and their object-teaching. There was a spiritual meaning to the Jews which the sacrifices taught and cultivated.

III. **OFFERING THE SACRIFICE; GOING TO GOD** (vers. 4-9). The self-dedication, the blood, the fire, laying the hand on the victim, confession of sin, the look of faith, the heart of love. See 51st Psalm (Isa. 1: 11; Hos. 6: 6).

IV. **NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT, SELF-DEDICATION** (Rom. 12: 1).

“Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my silver and my gold:
Not a mite would I withhold.”

“Take my love: my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, *only*, ALL for thee.”

THE ATONEMENT. The New Testament is full of the great sacrifice to which the Jewish sacrifices pointed. We must bring our scholars out of the porch into the glorious temple, where Jesus is the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world. See *References* under this head in *Explanatory*.

I. THE PROBLEM. *To save the world from sin.*

THE FACTORS. (1) To convince men of sin, so that they will seek to escape from it.

Illustration. Missionaries have told me that one of their greatest difficulties is to convince the heathen that they are sinners and need salvation. One of the greatest difficulties in lifting up and educating those who are degraded, is to make them see and feel their needs.

(2) To assure them that God is ready to forgive; to manifest his forgiving love.

(3) To furnish a ground and inspiration to faith.

(4) To eradicate the love of sin, the sinful nature.

(5) To forgive, and yet not make light of sin, as a small evil, and so by the very act of forgiveness take away one great barrier to the increase and multiplication of sin.

II. THE SOLUTION. *By the atoning sacrifice of Christ.*

ELEMENTS. 1. The voluntary offering of himself. There is no such thing as God's forcing his Son to bear our sins; Jesus laid down his own life. It was an act of heroism, as when one risks his life to save another from drowning.

Illustrations. When the Greeks were ready, for the sake of victory over Troy, to sacrifice Iphigenia, the beautiful daughter of King Agamemnon, their deed was mean and unworthy. But when the seven leading men of Calais went with ropes around their necks and offered themselves to Edward VI. as a substitute for the city, or when John Maynard died at his post steering the Lake Erie steamboat, to save the passengers and crew, the acts were heroic.

2. The sacrifice must be of the one who forgives, so as to express his abhorrence of sin. It is only as Jesus was divine, and so expressed God's own feelings, that we have a real atonement.

Illustration. This is best illustrated by the familiar story of Zeleucus, the king of the Locri. He enacted a law against adultery, the penalty of which was the putting out of both the eyes. The first one found guilty was the king's own son. But, out of love to his son the king had one of his own eyes put out, and one of his son's. Thus he saved his son from blindness, but at the same time so honored his law, that no one would imagine they could break it with impunity. It touched the heart of the son to see what his father had suffered for him, and would make a good man of him. So, by the atonement of Christ, all the ends of the law can be satisfied, and yet man be saved. This expresses what is called the *governmental theory* of the atonement. Punishment being the visible measure of the evil of sin, the atonement by which the punishment is removed must express in the same or a greater degree the evil of sin. The other theory of the atonement is the **MORAL INFLUENCE** theory. This also is true. We need both. There will be little moral influence without the great sacrifice for sin. See next lesson. This lesson sets before us a perfect example of **SUPREME DEDICATION TO GOD**, of doing what is duty at any cost.

To this sacrifice, with these teachings, did the sacrifices of the Israelites point, and for its understanding did they prepare.

Illustration. The superintendent of the Inebriate Asylum at Binghamton, N.Y., bore testimony to this truth when he said: "Some men are sent here under compulsion—almost driven here by their friends; and no such man is ever cured. No man ever has gone from this asylum cured of his inebriety unless there was some one—a sister, a mother, a wife, a maiden—who prayed for him, hoped for him, and wept for him, at home." The great redemptive power in life is the power of a suffering heart. But can God suffer? Can God be love and not suffer? Can love look on the sins and sufferings of its loved ones and not suffer? God is the great, the infinite, the eternal Lover; and all the elements that enter into the human experience of love are but the hints of the great tides of emotion that beat and throb in the heart of God. A soul without the power of love would be like an instrument on which no minor chord could be played. — *L. Abbott.*

LESSON VII. — AUGUST 12.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. — LEV. 16: 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Without shedding of blood is no remission.* — **HEB. 9: 22.**

TIME. — The directions concerning the Day of Atonement were given April-May, B.C. 1490. The Day of Atonement was the 10th of Tisri, about the first of October.

PLACE.—The Israelites were still in the valley before Mt. Sinai.

NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION.—Hebrews, chaps. 9 and 10.

PRONUNCIATIONS.—A'arōn (ār'ōn); Azā'zēl; Abi'hū; Fränk'incēse; Nā'dāb.

INTRODUCTION.

Our last lesson described but one of the many offerings and ceremonials prescribed for the teaching and training of the Israelites in religious life and thought and worship, as given in the Book of Leviticus. The announcement of the services of worship was interrupted at the 10th chapter by the disobedience and punishment of Nadab and Abihu, the eldest sons of Aaron, by sudden death by fire from the Lord. They seemed to have imagined that the services ordained by God were a mere ceremonial without any very decided meaning and teaching, so that it would not make much difference if they did vary from the commands according to their own pleasure. But by their sudden destruction as by a stroke of lightning, God taught the people that every ceremonial was made after a pattern in the heavens, and had its own special spiritual teaching, and any variation in it would teach wrong doctrines. In our lesson to-day we come to the regular annual days, one of supreme importance, the first one whose ceremonial is described.

1. And the LORD spake unto Moses ¹after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered^a before the LORD, and died;

2. And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he ²come not at all times into the holy *place* within the vail before the mercy seat, which *is* upon the ark; that he die not: for ³I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.

3. Thus^b shall Aaron ⁴come into the holy *place*; ⁵with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.

Rev. Ver.: a. they drew near before; b. herewith. ¹ Lev. 10: 1, 2. ² Ex. 30: 10. Lev. 23: 27. Heb. 9: 7; 10: 19. ³ Ex. 25: 22. ⁴ 1 Kings 8: 10-12. ⁵ Heb. 9: 7, 12, 24, 25. ⁶ Lev. 4: 3.

EXPLANATORY.

1. After the death of the two sons of Aaron: Nabad and Abihu, recorded in chap. 10.

2. Speak unto Aaron . . . that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail. He must not enter the Holy of Holies, within the vail that divided the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, whenever he pleased, but only on the Day of Atonement and in the manner prescribed in this chapter. He or the ordinary priests went every day into the Holy Place without the vail, to burn incense and to trim the golden lamps, and they might be tempted to look or go within the vail. That he die not: as did his two sons, for offering strange fire.

3. Thus shall Aaron come: that is, by means of the offerings and ceremonies which follow.

TEACHINGS. 1. We are to obey God's commands exactly, whether we understand all the reasons for them or not.

2. There is a holy sphere beyond us, something far higher and better, which can be attained only by obeying God's will, and by earnest and careful preparation. There is always something better higher up and farther on.

3. It is dangerous to character, to good morals, to the community, to be irreverent or thoughtless in the house of God.

1. The Day of Atonement. — This was the annual fast day of the Israelites, the only day of humiliation prescribed by the Mosaic ritual, all the other annual public days being festival and joyous. This fast day was observed on the 10th day of Tisri, the first month of the civil year, and seventh of the sacred year. Tisri covered parts of our September and October (according to the time of the new moon), and hence the 10th would be about the first of our October.

It was kept as a most solemn sabbath and fast, when all must abstain from work, and "afflict their souls," on pain of being "cut off from among the people" (ver. 29; Acts 27: 9). Its ceremonies signified the public humiliation of the people for all the sins of the past year, and the remission of those sins by the atonement which the high priest made within the vail,

4. He shall put on ¹the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these ^care holy garments; therefore ^dshall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

Rev. Ver.: c. they; d. and. ¹ Ex. 28: 39, 42, 43. Lev. 6: 10. Ezek. 44: 17, 18. ² Ex. 30: 20. Lev. 8: 6, 7.

whither he entered on this day only. — *Smith*. The Day of Atonement is the time when universal reconciliation takes place. Children ask forgiveness of parents; those who have wronged one another implore pardon; all differences on that occasion are healed, and everybody is on good terms with one another. — *C. S. Robinson*.

II. **The Scene of the Service** was centred about the Holy of Holies, which was entered only on this occasion, and by the high priest alone. All the ceremonies took place here and in the Holy Place of the tabernacle and in its court. The Holy of Holies itself was a perfect cube of 10 cubits (15 feet), thus bearing on all its dimensions the symbol of completeness, — an image of the all-perfect character of the Being who condescended to occupy it as the place of his manifested presence and glory. It contained only the ark of the covenant, with the tables of the law within it, and upon it the mercy-seat with the cherubim. Here God specially manifested himself in the Shekinah (ver. 2). All these things were symbolical, and spoke to the people of heaven (Heb. 9: 24) and holiness, the loving-kindness and forgiving mercy, as well as the glory and power of God and of his redeemed people (see Lesson V. of this quarter).

III. **The Services of the Day of Atonement.** — Vers. 3-16. (I.) PREPARATIONS, according to Jewish tradition. Of so much sacredness was this solemnity regarded, that the people began their preparation for it seven days before, by removing the high priest from his own house to a chamber in the temple (after the temple was built), lest he should contract such a pollution from any of his family, as might incur a seven days' uncleanness, and thereby unfit him for performing his pontifical duties. — *Bush*. A part of each day the elders or the representatives of the Sanhedrim read and expounded to him the ordinances contained in this chapter; which he had to practise in their presence, so as to make sure that he could rightly perform all the ceremonies. This continued during the whole night previous to the Day of Atonement, when he was kept awake, so as to prevent any pollution. He read, in the silent hours of darkness, the Books of Job, Daniel, Ezra, and Chronicles; and if he was no scholar, and could not read, the elders read them to him. — *Rawlinson*.

(II.) **THE DAILY MORNING SACRIFICE** in the court of the tabernacle, by the high priest himself, in his glorious robes, instead of the ordinary priests; at the first streak of morning light. When the first dawn of morning was announced, the high priest put off his ordinary (layman's) dress, bathed, put on his rich golden vestments, and proceeded to perform all the principal parts of the ordinary morning service. — *Edersheim*. In a conspicuous place he stood to give his benediction in full sight of the gathered people. And they all saw him in his splendor, the great breastplate glittering in the sun. — *Robinson*.

(III.) **THE CHANGE OF VESTMENTS FOR THE PECULIAR CEREMONIES OF THE DAY** (vers. 3-4). When he had finished the morning sacrifice he washed his hands and feet a second time at the laver. He then retired to a particular chamber of the temple, and proceeded to strip himself of his rich habiliments, to bathe himself in water a second time, and to put on his plain white linen vestments, the same dress as that worn by the common priests, except that he had the sacerdotal mitre on his head. Thus attired, he proceeded to the work of sacrifice.

4. **Linen girdle:** of plain white, instead of the variegated one usually worn by priests. **Mitre:** head-dress, turban.

TEACHINGS. I. The white linen dress of the high priest was intended to symbolize the purity and brightness which forms the characteristic of angels and saints, and, above all, of the King of saints. The color of the angelic raiment is described in the Gospels as *white*: "his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow" (Matt. 28: 3). So, too, the wife of the Lamb, in the Book of the Revelation, has it "granted to her that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19: 7, 8). — *Pulpit Com.* The white material of the dress which Aaron wore when performing the highest act of expiation under the Old Testament was a symbolical shadowing forth of the holiness and glory of the one perfect Mediator between God and man, who, as the true High Priest, being holy, innocent, unspotted, and separate from sinners, entered once by his own blood into the holy place not made with hands, namely, into

5. And he shall take of ¹the congregation of the children of Israel two kids ^o of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.

6. And Aaron shall offer ^g his bullock of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and ²make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

7. And he shall take the two goats, and present ^h them before the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle ⁱ of the congregation.

8. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the ^k scapegoat.

9. And Aaron shall bring ^g the goat upon which the LORD's lot ^l fell, and offer him *for* a sin offering.

Rev. Ver.: *e.* two he goats; *g.* present; *h.* set; *i.* tent of meeting; *k.* for Azazel; *l.* the lot fell for the LORD.

¹ Lev. 4: 14. Num. 29: 11. Ezek. 45: 22, 23. ² Lev. 9: 7. Heb. 5: 2; 7: 27, 28; 9: 7.

heaven itself, to appear before the face of God for us and obtain everlasting redemption (Heb. 1: 3; 7: 26; 9: 12, 24). — *Keil*.

2. So Christ laid aside his royalty and glory that he had with the Father, and became like one of us, only perfectly sinless.

3. Only by the washing of regeneration, the continual and repeated purification of the soul, can we enter God's holy place.

(IV.) PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING FOR HIS OWN SINS (vers. 3, 6). **3. With a young bullock for a sin offering:** which had to be of the second year (see Ex. 29: 1), and which the high priest had to buy with his own money. It was to be his own property because the victim was to expiate his own sins, since he, like the meanest sinner, required divine mercy and forgiveness, though, owing to his high office, he had to bring a more costly sacrifice. — *Rawlinson*.

6. And Aaron shall offer his bullock: *i.e.*, bring it forward for the sacrifice which is described in ver. 11. The bullock stood between the porch and the altar, with its face toward the tabernacle, while the priest faced the east, that is, toward the worshipping people. He then laid both his hands upon the head of the bullock and confessed as follows: O Lord, I have sinned, done perversely, and transgressed before thee, I and my house. I beseech thee, O Lord, expiate the sins, perversities, and transgressions whereby I have sinned, done perversely, and transgressed, I and my house, as it is written in the law of Moses, thy servant, saying (Lev. 16: 30), For in this day he will expiate for you, to purge you from all your sins before the Lord, that ye may be clean. — *Edersheim*.

(V.) PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERINGS FOR THE PEOPLE (vers. 5, 7-10). *Close to the worshipping people, in the eastern part of the court.*

5. And he shall take (select carefully) **of the congregation:** at the public expense. **Two kids of the goats.** Better, *two shaggy he-goats*. They were to be altogether alike in look, size, and value. — *Edersheim*. The two together were really one sacrifice.

7. Present them . . . at the door of the tabernacle: near the worshippers, on the east, and on the north side of the altar, where was placed the urn for the lots. — *Edersheim*. **Before the Lord.** The two goats were presented with their faces to the west, where the Holy of Holies was, and where the Divine Majesty was especially revealed. — *Rawlinson*.

8. And Aaron shall cast lots. In the urn were two lots of the same shape, size, and material, — in the second temple they were of gold, — the one bearing the inscription "*For Jehovah*," the other, "*For Azazel*" (scapegoat). The high priest shook the urn, thrust his two hands into it, drew the lots, laying one on the head of each goat. The scapegoat was now turned round towards the people, and stood facing them, waiting there, as it were, till their sins should be laid on him. — *Edersheim*.

THE SYMBOL. Assuredly a more marked type of Christ could not be conceived as he was brought forth by Pilate, and stood before the people, just as he was about to be led forth, bearing the iniquity of the people. — *Edersheim*.

9, 10. And Aaron shall bring, etc. This is the announcement of what was to be fulfilled later, as we shall see.

(VI.) THE SACRIFICE OF THE HIGH PRIEST'S SIN OFFERING (vers. 11-14). The high priest now once more returned towards the sanctuary, and a second time laid his two hands on the bullock, which still stood between the porch and the altar, to confess over him not only, as before, his own and his household's sins, but also those of the priesthood. Then the high priest killed the bullock, and caught up his blood in a vessel and gave it to an attend-

10. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the ^m scapegoat, shall be presented ⁿ alive before the LORD, to make ¹an atonement with ^o him, and to let ^p him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.

11. And Aaron shall bring ^q the bullock of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and shall make an ^r atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which *is* for himself:

12. And he shall take ²a censer full of burning ^s coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of ³sweet incense beaten small, and bring *it* within the veil:

13. ⁴And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the ⁵mercy seat that *is* upon the testimony, that he die not:

Rev. Ver.: *m.* for Azazel; *n.* set; *o.* for; *p.* to send him away for Azazel; *q.* present; *r.* omit an; *s.* omit burning. ¹ 1 John 2: 2. ² Lev. 10: 1. Num. 16: 18, 46. Rev. 8: 5. ³ Ex. 30: 34. ⁴ Ex. 30: 1, 7, 8. Num. 16: 7, 18, 46. Rev. 8: 3, 4. ⁵ Ex. 25: 21.

ant. Advancing to the altar of burnt offering, he next filled the censer with burning coals, and then ranged a handful of frankincense in the dish destined to hold it, and entered the Holy Place. The curtain of the Holy of Holies was folded back, and the high priest stood alone in the awful gloom of the holiest of all, only lit up by the red glow of the coals in the priest's censer. He now threw the incense on the coals, and waited till the smoke had filled the Most Holy Place. Retreating backwards, he prayed for the people. While the incense was offering in the Most Holy Place, the people withdrew from proximity to it, and worshipped in silence. At last the high priest emerged from the sanctuary, took the vessel of bullock's blood, and re-entering the Most Holy Place, sprinkled the blood upon and before the mercy-seat. — *Edersheim*.

TEACHINGS. 1. If sins are to be forgiven, they must first be confessed; confessed particularly, and not in general terms. — *Trumbull*.

2. The best of people, those highest in Christian service, are imperfect and sinful, and need confession and forgiveness.

3. The officers and teachers of religion must first be cleansed, must first experience the blessings of atoning love, before they are fitted to help save their fellow-men.

4. Sin must be a terrible, all-pervasive evil to require so much to save us from it.

(VII.) THE ATONEMENT FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE. ITS FIRST ASPECT (vers. 9, 15, 16). The two scapegoats exhibit the two aspects of atonement, the one the divine side, the atonement making it possible for God to forgive sins without contradicting his own nature, and increasing sin by its easy forgiveness; the other side being the actual forgiveness of sin and its removal from the heart and nation.

9. The goat upon which the Lord's lot fell: the one which was to be slain as an atonement for the sins of the people was now (ver. 15) sacrificed to make atonement for the holy place (ver. 16), on account of the sinfulness of both priests and worshippers, and because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions.

THIS SYMBOLIZED the Lamb of God, who made atonement for the sins of the world; who offered himself as a sacrifice, so that God could be just, and yet the justifier of all who believe on him. It was the ground-work of the atonement.

(VIII.) THE SCAPEGOAT. THE SECOND ASPECT OF THE ATONEMENT; THE TAKING AWAY OF SIN (ver. 10). Verse 10 records the statement of what was to be done, the actual fulfilment of which is recorded in the verses which follow the lesson (vers. 20-23).

THE SCAPEGOAT (Heb. Azâ'zêl). The word is regarded by many as a proper name for "the utterly banished demon," the prince of evil spirits; and the sin-laden goat was thus banished to the desolate regions of the prince of darkness. Others regard the word as meaning complete separation, and the sins represented by the scapegoat were completely removed, — even "as far as the east is from the west."

The atonement had been made, but the consciences of the people were not yet free from a sense of personal guilt and sin. Their own personal guilt and sins were now to be removed from them, and that in a symbolical rite, at one and the same time the most mysterious and the most significant of all. While the other goat was being sacrificed, the scapegoat had been looking eastward confronting the people, waiting for the terrible load which

14. And ¹he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and ²sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; ³and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.

15. ³Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that *is* for the people, and bring his blood ⁴within the vail, and do with that ^ublood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:

16. And he shall ⁵make an ^vatonement for the holy *place*, because of the uncleanness ^wof the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in ^xall their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle ^yof the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness. ^w

Rev. Ver.: *z*, on the east; *u*, his; *v*, omit an; *w*, uncleannesses; *x*, even all; *y*, tent of meeting. ¹ Lev. 4: 5. Heb. 9: 13, 25; 10: 4. ² Lev. 4: 6. ³ Heb. 2: 17; 5: 2; 9: 7, 28. ⁴ Lev. 16: 2. Heb. 6: 19; 9: 3, 7, 12. ⁵ Ex. 29: 36. Ezek. 45: 18. Heb. 9: 22, 23.

it was to carry away "unto a land not inhabited." Laying both his hands on the head of this goat, the high-priest now confessed and pleaded: "O Lord, thy people, the house of Israel, have transgressed; they have rebelled; they have sinned before thee. I beseech thee now absolve their transgressions, their rebellion, and their sin that they have sinned against thee, as it is written in the law of Moses thy servant, that on this day he shall make atonement for you to cleanse you from all your sins, and ye shall be cleansed." And while the prostrate multitude worshipped at the name of Jehovah, the high-priest turned his face towards them as he uttered the last words, "*Ye shall be cleansed!*" — *Edersheim*. After the confession had been made over the head of the scapegoat, it was committed to the charge of some person or persons, previously chosen for the purpose, and carried away into the wilderness; where, as we should understand (ver. 22), it was set at liberty. The arrival of the goat in the wilderness was telegraphed by the waving of flags from station to station, till a few minutes after its occurrence it was known in the temple, and whispered from ear to ear that "the goat had borne upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited." — *Edersheim*.

CONCLUDING SERVICES. After this there were readings of the Scripture, with prayers. The high-priest then changed his linen garments for the golden garments of his priesthood, and offered sin offerings and burnt offerings, and finally offered the evening incense, on the golden altar, and lit the lamps on the golden candlestick.

TEACHINGS. 1. The sinfulness and guilt of the heart and life.

2. The fact that an atonement has been made is not enough; our sins must be borne away.

3. Jesus Christ our sacrifice has not only made atonement for our sins, but takes our sins away, removes our sinful nature, remedies our sinful life.

4. God is so merciful, and his forgiveness so perfect, that our past sins are removed forever from his sight. Our sins and transgressions he will remember no more. They are utterly blotted out from the book of his remembrance.

5. In order to this, we must repent and confess and forsake.

6. The atonement is to lead us to see the awful guilt of sin, and to repent as in dust and ashes.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Edersheim's Temple and its Services, chap. 16; *Smith's Old Testament History*, sect. 6 of Appendix to Book III; *Fairbairn's Typology*; Professor Park and R. W. Dale on *The Atonement: The Home and the Synagogue of the Modern Jew*; *Spurgeon's Sermons*, 9: 117; *Monday Club Sermons*, 1881, p. 393.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

THE CONNECTION, showing the fate of Nadab and Abihu, and its bearing on these lessons.

SUBJECT, — THE ATONEMENT.

I. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT (vers. 1-3). Its sacrifices and services, as described in the notes. Show the deep religious fervor that was intended to accompany them (Ps. 51: 6; Isa. 58: 5-11).

APPLICATION to our fast-days. Needed. Do not abolish them, but put spiritual life and power into them. No dead forms of any kind.

Illustration. The need of atonement. During the great plague of London, the store-keepers who still remained at their posts would not receive money from the hands of their customers. Bringing the articles asked for, they laid them down and retired to a little distance, leaving a cup or basin full of some disinfecting fluid, into which the coins tendered in payment were to be dropped. Infection clung to the coins which had been handled by sick persons. So in to-day's lesson, God tells how the sin of the Israelites had defiled the tabernacle, and he gives directions for its cleansing. — *H. C. Trumbull.*

II. THE FIRST ASPECT OF ATONEMENT; EXPIATION FOR SIN (ver. 4-6, 12-16). The number and variety of SIN OFFERINGS in this lesson. The confession of sin; the applied blood; the accompanying incense as a type of prayer.

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. The Holy of Holies a type of heaven (Heb. 9: 7, 8, 24). Christ the sin offering (Heb. 10: 10-12; 13: 11-13). For Scripture and *Illustrations* of the atonement, see last lesson.

Illustration. In winter you have looked, almost with shuddering, on some rough, black piece of ground. Then the snow fell, covering every harshness and impurity, and everything was pure and white. That is what the Hebrew word for "atonement" means. It is the "covering" which is thrown over the foulness of man's sin, and the shield which Mercy interposes to save the sinner. — *S. S. Times.*

III. THE SECOND ASPECT OF THE ATONEMENT; THE TAKING AWAY OF SIN (vers. 7-10). A vivid picture of the scapegoat. Sin not only atoned for, but removed (1) from God's sight, and (2) from man's heart.

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. Meaning of the frequent washings (Ps. 51: 7; John 3: 5; Rom. 6: 3-5; Titus 3: 5). No entering heaven unless sin is removed (Rev. 21: 27; 22: 14, 15). The atonement of Christ removes sin (1 John 1: 7). How (Heb 10: 14-17)?

Illustration. The fact that we have committed sin remains even after we have forsaken the sin and have been forgiven. But as the bright sun shining on a piece of black coal makes the coal look white, hiding the blackness by the brilliancy of the rays, so the love of God in Christ shines so brightly on our sinful hearts, that in admiration of that love the blackness of sin will be unseen.

THE THIRD ASPECT OF THE ATONEMENT; THE MORAL INFLUENCE THEORY. This grows out of the other theory referred to in our last lesson. The greatest influences possible to affect the human soul flow from the sacrifice of Christ. Every possible power that can be exerted toward redeeming souls from sin radiates from the cross.

- (1) Christ's sacrifice shows the evil and danger of sin in the highest degree.
- (2) It shows God's holiness and justice united.
- (3) It sets forth the wondrous love of God.
- (4) It presents with the greatest intensity all motives for leaving sin: hope, fear, love, duty.
- (5) It opens the way by which God can forgive all who repent and forsake their sins.
- (6) But in such a way that no one will imagine that God thinks lightly of sin, or will treat it lightly.
- (7) It sets before us the supreme example of consecration to God and duty, the self-sacrifice of love.

LESSON VIII. — AUGUST 19.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. — LEV. 23: 33-44.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.* — Ps. 118: 15.

TIME. — These directions were given in April, May, B.C. 1490. The Feast of the Tabernacles was held annually about the first week in October.

PLACE. — The Plain of Er Râhah, before Mount Sinai.

PARALLELS. — In Num. 29: 12-39 is a fuller account of the offerings and sacrifices of this feast.

A celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles more than a thousand years after this is described in Neh. 8.

What Jesus did and said at one of these feasts is recorded in John 7: 14-43.

INTRODUCTION.

The Day of Atonement (our last lesson) was only one of several great days celebrated in the seventh month of the religious year, the first of the civil year. The Feast of Trumpets introduced the month, and joyful were the anticipations of blessing. Then on the tenth day came the great ritual of atonement, with its penitential sadness. Then came, on the fifteenth day, the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles. "It is a mistake to suppose that the religion of the Old Testament was only stern and repressive. It did have its side of restraint and self-denial, and thence sprung much that was best in the character and happiness of the people. But it also had its side of cheer and hope, indeed of festivity." — *Dr. Groul.*

NOTE. These feasts were probably not kept in the wilderness, and parts of the descriptions given in the Notes refer to later times, after the temple was built.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Great Feasts of the Jews.

1. The weekly Sabbath.
2. The Feast of the New Moon, to announce the beginning of the new month, by means of two silver trumpets.
3. The Sabbatical Month and the Feast of Trumpets. This feast marked the beginning of the new civil year, 1st day of Tisri (October), which was the Sabbatical Month, in which several feasts were held. It was so arranged as to always begin on the Sabbath.
4. The Sabbatical Year (every seventh year).
5. The Year of Jubilee (every fiftieth year).
6. The Day of Atonement.

THE THREE GREAT ANNUAL FESTIVALS. At each of which all the men were required to present themselves at the sanctuary.

(I.) *The Feast of the Passover*, beginning on the 14th day of Nisan (Abib) (our April-May), which was the first month of the sacred year. It was a variable feast, and corresponds as to time with our Good Friday and Easter. The fifteenth day was, strictly speaking, the Feast of the Passover. The seven days following this were to be observed as the Feast of Unleavened Bread, during which it was unlawful to use bread made with leaven.

(II.) *The Feast of Pentecost*, held on the 50th day after the Passover; by which time the grain harvest had been gathered. Hence it was called the Feast of the First Fruits, and Pentecost, which means the "Fiftieth."

(III.) *The Feast of Tabernacles*, which we study to-day.

NOTE. The festivals were arranged so as to interfere as little as possible with the industry and convenience of the people; the Passover just before harvest, Pentecost at the conclusion of the harvest and before the vintage, the Tabernacles after all the fruits were gathered. In winter, when travelling was difficult, there were no festivals. — *Sunday-school Teacher.*

TEACHINGS. 1. "The three great feasts represent the beginning, the progress, and the triumphant close of a godly life." 2. *The first* of the three great annual feasts spoke, in the presentation of the first sheaf, of the *founding of the Church*; the *second* of its harvesting, when the *Church in its present state* should be presented as two leavened wave-loaves (the mixture of good and evil, with thanksgiving for the good); while the *third* pointed forward to the *full harvest in the end*, when "in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things." It was the feast of ingathering. Thus in the description of the "latter-day" glory at the close of the prophecies of Zechariah, the conversion of all nations is distinctly connected with the Feast of Tabernacles. — *Edersheim.*

II. The Benefits of these Great Feasts. — (I.) *Political effects.* Annual gatherings of the people exhibited the numerical strength of the nation. As they saw the vast crowds flocking from all parts of the kingdom to the capital, their patriotic ardor would be fired. The numbers would be great, as each tribe desired to be well represented. The unity of the nation, too, would be insured by this fusion of the tribes. Otherwise they would be likely to constitute separate tribal states. They would carry back to the provinces glowing accounts of the wealth, power, and resources of the country.

33. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

34. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, ¹The ^a fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall*^b be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD.

Rev. Ver.: a, on the; b, is. ¹ Ex. 23: 16. Num. 29: 12. Deut. 16: 13. Neh. 8: 14. Zech. 14: 16. John 7: 2.

(II.) *Sanitary effects.* They would greatly influence the health of the people. The Sabbath, necessitating weekly cleansings, and rest from work, and laws, and ceremonies concerning disease (as leprosy), and purifications, deserve to be looked at in this light also. The annual purifying of the houses at the feast of unleavened bread, the dwelling at certain times in tents, leaving the houses to the free circulation of light and air, and the repeated journey on foot to Jerusalem, must have had a great sanitary influence. The rest from labor, the change of air and scene, the breaking up of routine methods of living, brought great benefits to the health and life of the people. Vacation seasons are no modern invention, but ordained by God of old.

(III.) *Social effects.* Promoted friendly intercourse between travelling companions. Distributed information through the country at a time when the transmission of news was slow and imperfect. Imported into remote provincial districts a practical knowledge of all improvements in arts and sciences. Enlarged the general stock of knowledge by bringing many minds, and great variety of taste, together. Spread before the eyes of the nation the wonders collected in Jerusalem by the wealth and foreign alliances of Jewish kings.

(IV.) *Moral effects.* The young looking forward to, the aged looking back upon, and all talking about past or future pilgrimages to the city of the great King. Education, thus, of memory and hope and desire. Influence of this on the habits of the people. Thrift promoted to provide against expenses of the journey. The promise of bearing company held out as reward to well-conducted youth. Enlargement of knowledge, improvement of taste, advantage to health, fixing habits, etc., would all react morally on the character of the people.

(V.) *Religious effects.* These the most important. Preserved the religious faith of the nation and religious unity among the people. Constantly reminded the people of the divinely wrought deliverances of the past. Promoted gratitude and trust. This God their dwelling-place in all generations. Testified the reverence of the people for the temple and its sacred contents. Influence of well-conducted temple-services upon the synagogues through the land. Led the mind of the nation to adore the one true and only God.—Chiefly from *Class and Desk*.

III. The Feast of Tabernacles. THANKSGIVING DAY.—Vers. 33-42.

TIME. 34. The fifteenth day of this seventh month: *i.e.*, at full moon, when the sacred month had, so to speak, attained its full strength. There is no question that the months of the religious year were lunar; they began with the new moon.—*Johnson*. The fifteenth began with sunset on the fourteenth, according to the ancient mode of reckoning time (ver. 32). **The seventh month:** of the sacred year, but the beginning of the civil year. It closed not only the sacred cycle, but also the agricultural or working year. It also marked the change of seasons, the approach of rain and of the winter equinox, and determined alike the commencement and the close of a sabbatical year.—*Edersheim*.

PLACE. This festival was held five days after the great day of atonement. Its position thus expressed the joy and gladness and the prosperity which would follow repentance of sin, the forgiveness of God, and renewed dedication and consecration to God.

BOOTHS. **The feast of tabernacles.** Booths, huts, or sheds: those used at the festival were constructed of boards, and covered with boughs. The Hebrew word does not refer to tents, for which there was another term.—*Johnson*. These huts, when the festival was celebrated in Jerusalem, were constructed in the courts of houses, on the roofs, in the court of the temple, in the street of the Water Gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. The boughs were of the olive, palm, pine, myrtle, and other trees with thick foliage (ver. 40; Neh. 8: 15, 16).—*S. Clark*. The trees were emblematical. The thick shady trees, such as the oak or beech, afforded shelter and protection, and suggested the protection and shelter of the covenant of God. The “palm” was an emblem of victory (Rev. 7: 9). The “willows of the brook” represented the thriving condition of the happy (Isa. 44: 4). The olive was a symbol of peace (see Neh. 8: 15).—*J. A. MacDonald*.

LENGTH OF THE FEAST. For seven days unto the Lord. All these seven days “all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths” (ver. 42). It was followed (ver. 36) by a holy day, the eighth, to be kept most religiously.

35. On the first day *shall be* a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work *therein*.^c

36. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD; ¹ on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation unto you, and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it *is* a ²solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work *therein*.

37. ³These *are* the ^dfeasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, and a meat^e offering, a sacrifice, and drink offering, every thing^g upon his day:

38. ⁴Beside the sabbaths of the LORD, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the LORD.

39. Also^h in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have ⁵gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day *shall be* a sabbath,ⁱ and on the eighth day *shall be* a sabbath.ⁱ

Rev. Ver.: *c.* omit therein; *d.* the set feasts; *e.* meal; *g.* each on its own day; *h.* howbeit on; *i.* a solemn rest. ¹ Num. 29: 35. Neh. 8: 18. John 7: 37. ² Deut. 16: 8. 2 Chron. 7: 9. Joel 1: 14; 2: 15. ³ Lev. 23: 2, 4. ⁴ Num. 29: 39. ⁵ Ex. 23: 16. Deut. 16: 13.

THE SABBATH REST. 35. On the first day shall be a holy convocation. The assembling of the people for solemn and joyous worship, both at the national sanctuary and in the cities and villages throughout the land. Ye shall do no servile work: literally, *work of labor*; that is, work which belongs to the ordinary labors of one's worldly calling. Works of necessity and mercy are of course not prohibited.—*Johnson*. The first day of the year did not always come upon a Sabbath, but it was to be kept as a day of rest, like a Sabbath, but not quite so strictly. See on ver. 39.

THE OFFERINGS (vers. 36-38). 36. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire. The burnt-offerings of the Feast of Tabernacles were by far more numerous than those of any other festival. There were offered on each day two rams, 14 lambs, and a kid for a sin-offering. But what was most peculiar was the arrangement of the sacrifices of bullocks, in all amounting to 70. 13 were offered on the first day, 12 on the second, 11 on the third, and so on, reducing the number by one each day till the seventh, when seven bullocks only were offered. When the Feast of Tabernacles fell on a sabbatical year, portions of the law were read each day in public to men, women, children, and strangers.—*Smith*. Whilst these sacrifices were being offered up, the Levites chanted the festive Hallel (Psalms), as on the feasts of Passover and Pentecost.—*C. D. Ginsbury, LL.D.* Each of the 70 bullocks was accompanied by an abundant oblation and drink-offering; and as the number of bullocks diminished daily, so also did the number of oblations and drink-offerings, so that there were 13 on the first day, and 7 on the seventh. There were obvious reasons why the feast should be thus especially marked by these two kinds of sacrifice. It was the feast of ingathering, the national harvest-home; and it was the fitting season to dedicate the person in burnt-offerings (Ex. 32: 6 and Lev. 7: 37), and the property, increased by the harvests of the season, in oblations and drink-offerings (Lev. 7: 37).—*S. Clark*. And also to recognize God's forgiving love in the sin-offerings. It is a solemn assembly. The word in the original hardly means this; still less does it mean "day of restraint," as in the margin. It is a peculiar word, which seems to mean conclusion or closing festival.—*Todd*. It was the last day, not only of this feast, but of the whole cycle of festivals, and therefore well called the *great day of the feast*.

37. These are the feasts. Vers. 37-44 are a recapitulation, with an appendix, on dwelling in booths.—*Murphy*. These feasts which have been described in the foregoing chapters.

38. Beside the sabbaths. The expression "sabbaths" stands here for *the sacrifices of the sabbaths*. The meaning, therefore, of the passage before us is, that the sacrifices ordered for each of these festivals are to be in addition to the sacrifices appointed to each weekly sabbath in the year; so that when one of these festivals falls on a sabbath, the sacrifices due to the latter are not set aside by the former. Both must be offered in their proper order.—*Ginsbury*. Beside your gifts. Nor are they to interfere with the voluntary offerings which each individual brought privately (Deut. 16: 10, 17), or with the performance of vows (Deut. 12: 6-12).—*Ginsbury*.

CEREMONIES. 39. Here certain regulations are introduced which were not inwoven with

40. And ¹ye shall take you on the first day the boughs^k of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; ²and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.

41. ³And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year: *it shall^l be* a statute for ever in your generations; ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

42. ⁴Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites^m born shall dwell in booths:

43. ⁵That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

44. And Moses ⁶declared unto the children of Israel theⁿ feasts of the LORD.

Rev. Ver.: *k*. fruit; *l* is; *m*. are home born in Israel; *n*. the set feasts.

¹ Neh. 8: 15.

² Deut. 16: 14, 15.

³ Num. 29: 12. Neh. 8: 18.

⁴ Neh. 8: 14-16.

⁵ Deut. 31: 13.

Ps. 78: 5, 6.

⁶ Lev. 23: 2.

the previously given laws respecting the feast, because those laws were, like the laws regulating the other feasts, wholly concerned with the religious and sacrificial observances of the festival. Also: the word in the original is not only connective, but also emphatic, *surely*. A sabbath (Rev. Ver., *solemn rest*): the word thus rendered is a variation of the one usually rendered *sabbath*, and means a little Sabbath, or a day of sabbatical rest. On such days the prohibition of labor was somewhat relaxed. Both the sabbaths mentioned in this latter part of the verse were of this character. — Todd.

40. Boughs (Rev. Ver., *fruits*): a fruit in the left hand, and branches in the right. On the eve of the second day, or what is called the lesser festival, and on each of the five succeeding nights, was celebrated the "rejoicing of the water-drawing" in the court of the temple. Four huge golden candelabra were lighted in the centre of the court, and the light emanating from them was visible to the whole city. Around these lights pious men danced before the people with lighted flambeaux in their hands, singing hymns and songs of praise, whilst the Levites, who were stationed on the fifteen steps which led into the women's court, and which corresponded to the fifteen psalms of degrees, *i.e.*, steps (Ps. 120 to 134), accompanied the songs with instrumental music. It is supposed that on the last evening of the festival, when the splendid light of this grand illumination was to cease, Christ called attention to himself, "I am the light of the world" (John 8: 12), which is to shine for ever, and illuminate not only the temple and the holy city, but all the world. — Dr. Ginsbury.

Early in the morning of the last great day of the feast, the people, with the Paradise apple (a species of citron) in their left hands and branches in their right, march to the sound of music, in a procession headed by a priest who bore a golden pitcher, to draw water from the fountain of Siloam south of the temple. Here the priest filled from this fountain the golden pitcher, and brought it back into the court of the temple amid the shouts of the multitude and the sound of cymbals and trumpets. The rejoicing was so great that the Rabbis used to say that he who had never been present at this ceremony, and at the other similar ceremonies by which this feast was distinguished, did not know what rejoicing meant. The return was so timed that they should arrive just as they were laying the pieces of the sacrifice on the great altar of burnt-offering, toward the close of the ordinary morning-sacrifice service. The water from the golden pitcher was poured upon the altar. Immediately the great "Hallel," consisting of Psalms 113-118, was chanted antiphonally, or, rather, with responses, to the accompaniment of the flute. As the Levites intoned the first line of each psalm, the people repeated it; while to each of the other lines they responded by *Hallelu Yah* ("Praise ye the Lord"). At the close, they shook towards the altar the *Lulabh* (branches) which they held in their hands, as if with this token of the past to express the reality and cause of their praise, and to remind God of his promises. It was in an interval of silence after this that Jesus cried out, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." — Edersheim.

IV. Teachings of this Festival. — Vers. 43, 44. 1. Memories of the past inspire and encourage the present. 43. That your generations may know, etc. They are reminded of the deliverance from Egypt, of their small and poor beginnings, of the wilderness in contrast with the land flowing with milk and honey. God's goodness and power gave them their land and their prosperity. He was a God worthy of their love and trust.

2. The consciousness of dependence on God, ever present with them, was of great value in helping them to be obedient, loving, worshipful, moral.

3. There is great value in expressing our thanksgiving to God, in deepening the feeling of gratitude.

4. Religion is naturally joyous, awakens the glad and peaceful feelings, dissipates gloom, favors pure festivity and social joys.

5. The religious element should pervade all our social recreations. Consecration, worship, prayer, religious feelings and conversation, elevate, purify, and intensify our recreations and social pleasures. It is never safe to go where religion is excluded.

6. Every person should take such social recreations. By them energy is increased, knowledge is enlarged, the sympathies are widened, the spirit is uplifted. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

7. Life is a pilgrimage. We should live conscious that we are pilgrims and strangers, waiting and preparing for the joyous going home.

8. The drawing of the water prefigured the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

9. It was a day of triumph, looking forward to the ingathering of the whole world into the kingdom of God. This assurance increases our present joy. Coming events cast their glories before.

10. All this joy should be accompanied by charity (ver. 22; Deut. 16: 14), gifts to those less favored, help to all those in need. Joyous as this festival was, the joy was intensified by giving. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

V. **Thanksgiving Days.** — Thanksgiving Days, we see, are no modern innovation, but as old as the visible kingdom of God. Every nation needs them. But they should be filled with religious fervor. They should be days of religion as well as of festivity. Sometimes ministers help to degrade the day, and keep people from the public worship, by preaching "secular" sermons, not tending to increase the grateful spirit. Blessed are those who have social and family festive days filled with a religious spirit.

Thus, too, every Christian should take special pains to attend some of the great religious gatherings of the church every year. There will be a lack in the spiritual life of every person who fails to experience the enthusiasm, the social blessing, the heavenly experience of such assemblies.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Edersheim's *Temple and its Services*; Johnson's *Moses and Israel*; *Monday Club Sermons*, sixth series; Smith's *Old Test. History*; Cowles' *Jewish History*; Milman's *Hist. of the Jews*, I: 204; Foster's *Cyclopedia of Illustrations*, I: 5,667-5,673; II: 11,945-11,951; *Bib. Treasury*, I: 62; VIII: 1709.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

REVIEW briefly, and CONTRAST that annual day with the one we study to-day.

SUBJECT, — THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S MERCIES.

I. THE THREE GREAT FESTIVALS (vers. 37, 38). A brief description. The benefits of these festivals to the people.

APPLICATION to great religious meetings, and their value to modern Christians. Vacations; change of scene and thought and companionship; associated with religion. How this plan purifies, ennobles, and enriches social pleasure and chance.

Illustration. The man with the muck-rake in the Interpreter's object-lessons, in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

II. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. — A THANKSGIVING DAY (vers. 33-42). When and how it was celebrated, with the accompanying ceremonies.

III. TEACHINGS (vers. 43, 44). As in *Explanatory*.

Illustration. The origin of our Thanksgiving Days was on this wise: The early New-England fathers, in their anxieties and trials, had often had public days of fasting and prayer for deliverance. One day when it was proposed to appoint another fast-day, a farmer arose, and said that he proposed that they keep a day of thanksgiving instead for the mercies they had already received. They did so; and there has never been a year since when they and their descendants have not had abundant mercies for which to be thankful.

Illustration. In Eastern poetry they tell of a wondrous tree, on which grew golden apples and silver bells; and every time the breeze went by and tossed the fragrant branches, a shower of those golden apples fell, and the living bells chimed and tinkled forth their airy

ravishments. On the Gospel tree there grow melodious blossoms: holy feelings, heaven-taught joys; the sweet sense of forgiveness; the conscious exercise of all the devout affections, and grateful and adoring emotions Godward; the lull of sinful passions, itself ecstatic music, an exulting sense of the security of the well-ordered covenant; the gladness of surety, righteousness, and the kind spirit of adoption, which are summed up in that comprehensive word, "Joy in the Holy Ghost." — *Dr. James Hamilton.*

Illustration. At the Framingham camp-meeting a man gave his experience, that formerly he had lived at Grumble Corner, but lately he had moved up on to Thanksgiving Street; and he found the air purer, the sunshine more cheerful, and the people better neighbors. — *P.*

APPLICATIONS. To Thanksgiving Day, to religious joy, to religion in our pleasures, to the church and festivals, to giving to others in our seasons of rejoicing.

IV. NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT ON OLD TESTAMENT THEMES. Jesus' first attendance at a feast (Luke 2: 41, 42). What Jesus said at a feast of Tabernacles (John 7: 37-39). Jesus' words about giving (Acts 20: 35). The command to rejoice (Phil. 4: 4; Heb. 13: 15). Reasons for thanksgiving (1 Pet. 1: 3; 2: 9; Eph. 1: 3; 1 Cor. 15: 57). Recalling past mercies (2 Cor. 1: 4, 5).

LESSON IX. — AUGUST 26.

THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND OF FIRE. — NUM. 9: 15-23.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me.* — Ps. 43: 3.

TIME. — The Shekinah took its place above the tabernacle on the first day of the first month of the second year after the departure from Egypt (compare ver. 15 with Ex. 40: 2), April, B.C. 1490. But the account belongs about 50 days later, as the Israelites were about to leave Sinai, and go forward on their journey (Num. 10: 11).

PLACE. — The valley before Sinai.

PARALLELS. — First appearance of the Shekinah at Etham (Ex. 13: 21, 22). A defence against the Egyptians at the Red Sea (Ex. 14: 19, 20). Takes its place above the tabernacle (Ex. 40: 34). Moses before the Israelites (Num. 10: 11, 33-36).

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS. — The third book of the Pentateuch; written by Moses. Called Numbers "mainly from its account of the *numbering, mustering, or marshalling* of the people on two different occasions, the first in the commencement of the history, the other towards the close. Besides which we meet with various *lists* or *enumerations* of persons and places, that may have entered into the account with those who first adopted the title." — *Bush.*

INTRODUCTION.

The giving of the ceremonial law, largely contained in Leviticus, was completed, and the nation of Israel was about to start again on their journey through the wilderness to the promised land. This movement began on the twentieth day of the second month of the second year after leaving Egypt (Num. 10: 11), at the close of the fifty days given up to receiving the ceremonial law, and arranging the services of the tabernacle. Hence "the account of the cloud covering the tabernacle is repeated in this place, inasmuch as the history which follows relates the removal of the tabernacle under the guidance of the same cloud which covered it at its erection."

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Need of Guidance. — We are called to contemplate a numerous host of men, women, and children, travelling through a trackless wilderness, "where there was no way," — passing over a dreary waste, a vast sandy desert, without compass or human guide. What a thought! what a spectacle! There were those millions of people moving along without any knowledge of the route by which they were to travel, as wholly dependent upon God for guidance as for food and all beside; a thoroughly helpless pilgrim host. They could form no plans for the morrow. When encamped, they knew not when they were to

15. And ¹on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, *namely*,^a the tent of the testimony: and ²at even^b there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the^c morning.

16. So it was alway: the cloud covered it *by day*^d and the appearance of fire by night.

Rev. Ver.: *a.* even; *b.* evening it was; *c.* omit the; *d.* omit by day.
Ps. 78: 14. ² Ex. 13: 21; 40: 38.

¹ Ex. 40: 34. Neh. 9: 12, 19.

march; and when on the march, they knew not when or where they were to halt. Theirs was a life of daily and hourly dependence. — *C. H. Mackintosh*. There may have been some kind of track from Sinai, but not perhaps in the direction in which they were going. Even in Palestine, at this time, the only tracks — except the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, which resembles a cart road over a ploughed field — are like the dry bed of the most rocky river, where, amid blocks of stone, each makes his way at a foot pace, as best he can." — *Pal. Fund Rept.*, Oct., 1880, p. 241. There were enemies of whom they knew almost nothing; and dangers of various kinds, from hunger, from thirst, from serpents, from wandering tribes. Nor could the people know what was best for them to train them for the conquest of the promised land, and for the best use of it when they had obtained it, to be the people of God, and to make known to the nations the true religion and the true God.

OUR NEED OF GUIDANCE. Life is to us an unknown sea; or a trackless region of country. The future is hidden by an impenetrable veil. We do not know what is to befall us, what circumstances will surround us, what temptations we shall meet, what work is to be done, what dangers incurred, what trials endured.

II. **Their Guide and Guard, — The Pillar of Cloud and of Fire.** — Vers. 15-23. 15. On the day that the tabernacle was reared up: nearly a year after the Exodus. The tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month of the second year (Ex. 40: 2), the Exodus taking place on the fifteenth day of the first month of the previous year. The cloud covered the tabernacle, *namely* (*i.e.*, especially) the tent of the testimony: *i.e.*, the cloud did not cover the whole structure, court and all, but only the portion of it in which the ark was placed, including perhaps the Holy Place, as well as the Holy of Holies.

THE PILLAR OF CLOUD. A visible pillar of cloud or vapor, a conspicuous object that could be seen not only by the marshalled host, but by the scattered companies of women and children, as they fed their flocks, and followed afar off the marvellous signal of the divine presence. A great host, marching through a country without roads or other marks of civilization, must be provided with some conspicuous object to serve as a signal to the main body, and to all straggling parties connected with it. Hence the round grate, full of kindled fuel, elevated on a pole, which was carried before caravans and armies in the East. The ancient Persians carried a sacred fire in silver altars before their armies, and other ancient nations observed a similar custom.

THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AS A SYMBOL OF GOD. 1. It was real, and yet without definite form, and hence impressed the actual existence of God, and at the same time avoided all material likeness that would lead to idolatry. 2. The cloud is a visible sign of that moisture which is all-pervasive in nature, teaching that God has special manifestations and yet is omnipresent. 3. It adapts itself to varying circumstances, and yet is permanent. Mr. Ruskin describes a cloud in the Alps which was perfectly stationary by a mountain peak, although a gale was blowing through it, for it was being continually formed by the moisture in the wind. 4. The cloud hides and yet reveals. Clouds and darkness are around God's throne, but their presence there reveals the presence of God, and something of his nature; as the human body of Christ hid the divine in him, and yet revealed it. 5. The position of the cloud, balancing itself in the air without support, hinted at the self-existent, independent nature of God. — *P.* At even . . . as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning: not a real fire, but the appearance or semblance of fire, that would shine in the darkness when a mere cloud would be invisible.

THE PILLAR OF FIRE AS A SYMBOL OF GOD. 1. It is immaterial. 2. It is ineffably glorious and unapproachable. 3. It is mysterious in its nature. 4. As light, it is everywhere, — omnipresent. 5. It is the enlightener of the world. 6. It is the source of life, beauty, and power. 7. It is undefiled and undefilable, absolutely pure. 8. It is terrible as a destructive power against evil. 9. It is warming and cheering, life-giving, healthful to those who are its friends. — *P.*

17. And when^e the cloud ^lwas taken up from the^o tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched^h their tents.

18. At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: ^h ²as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they restedⁱ in their tents.

19. And when the cloud tarried long^k upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel ³kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not.

20. And^l so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according^m to the commandment of the LORD they abodeⁱ in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed.

21. And^l so it was, when the cloud abode from evenⁿ unto the morning, and *that*^o the cloud was taken up in the morning, then^p they journeyed: whether^q it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed.

22. Or^r whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining^s thereon, the children of Israel ⁴abodeⁱ in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed.

Rev. Ver.: *e.* whenever; *g.* from over the Tent; *h.* encamped; *i.* remained encamped; *k.* omit long; *l.* and sometimes the cloud was; *m.* add then; *n.* evening until; *o.* when; *p.* omit then; *q.* or if it continued by day and by night when the cloud, etc.; *r.* omit or; *s.* abiding. ¹ Ex. 40: 36. Num. 10: 11, 33, 34. Ps. 80: 1. ² 1 Cor. 10: 1. ³ Num. 1: 53; 3: 8. ⁴ Ex. 40: 36, 37.

17. And when the cloud was taken up: *i.e.*, rose to a higher elevation, so as to be conspicuous at the remotest extremities of the camp, which must have been at least five or six miles square. It seems difficult to imagine an encampment of two millions of people, with their cattle, and the wide open space required for the tabernacle, except as covering a great extent of country with its one-storied dwellings. Paris with its 2,000,000 inhabitants, contains, *inside the fortifications*, 7,800 square hectares = 30½ square miles. The ring of fortifications, closely hemming in the houses, which, indeed, extend in many parts far beyond them, is 36 kilom. long = over 22 miles. But Paris is built in houses many stories high. — *Geikie*. And in the place where the cloud abode. We must probably picture to ourselves the cloud rising to some considerable height when it was "taken up," so as to be visible for a great distance, and as settling down again over the spot where the tabernacle was to be set up. In this way the signals given by the cloud would be immediately perceived by a vast multitude. — *Pulpit Com.*

18. At the commandment of the Lord: made known by the signal of the cloud moving or abiding on the tabernacle.

19. And when the cloud tarried long. At one time they rested eighteen years together; at another but one day; at another one night. In this there is evidently nothing capricious or unstable to be charged upon the people, as their movements were constantly regulated by the divine direction, and this again was undoubtedly governed by reasons of infinite wisdom, though not expressly made known. — *Bush*. The children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord. The meaning doubtless is, that they persisted, with the most exemplary patience, in the observance of all the prescribed rites and ceremonies, without presuming to anticipate the divine order for breaking up. They kept the charge of the Lord, by obeying his will as to their movements. — *Bush*.

21. Whether it was by day or by night. Night travelling is not uncommon in the East, where the heat of the day is very severe. — *Bush*.

22. Two days, or a month, or a year. It is obvious from this that their times of tarrying at the different stations were very unequal. — *Bush*.

CHRIST, OUR LIGHT AND GUIDE. Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Word of God, is our pillar of cloud and of fire. He has come to be the light of the world. He teaches us the way to heaven, and shows the way by having walked in it. He is wise and strong, knowing all things present, past, and future, for he is divine. He shines through the Word, giving light in the darkness. He abides upon his church, and in the temple of each loving heart. He leads us by his providence, by his Spirit, by the principles of his Word, by his example. All who follow him will reach the promised land.

WAY STATIONS ON THE JOURNEY OF LIFE. As the whole history, however, of the

23. At the commandment of the LORD they rested⁴ in their tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they ¹kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

Rev. Ver.: *z. encamped.* ¹ Num. 9: 19.

wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness was obviously intended to be typical of the varied experience of the Lord's people in their life-journeying through the world, so we may regard these apparently zigzag marches and longer or shorter tarryings at different stations, as pointing to that vast diversity of *states* through which the Lord's pilgrims pass on their way to the heavenly Canaan. At one time they make a brief pause or halt in a particular state; at another they take up a long abode in such a state, and the plucking up the stakes and loosening the cords of the tents denote the breaking away and disentanglements which occur when they make a transition from one stage to another of their spiritual progress. — *Bush.*

III. Strange Guidance. — The Lord was guiding the people to the promised land. We can imagine them saying, Now that the Lord guides us we will be led only in pleasant ways, in green pastures and beside still waters, away from dangers and enemies, away from serpents and drought and hunger, and we will reach the promised land by the shortest route, in the quickest time. But, as a matter of fact, the Lord had led them into the trouble by the Red Sea, into the dry and thirsty land where no water was. He led them where they suffered from hunger and thirst, where they were bitten by serpents, where enemies stood ready to attack them, and kept them forty years on a journey that could have been accomplished in a few weeks. The Lord himself did this by his guiding pillar, as well as led them by the wells and palm groves of Elim, fed them with manna, delivered them from their enemies, and brought water out of the rock.

Why did the Lord lead them thus? It was to prepare them for the promised land when they should reach it, and fit them to conquer all enemies, to be a prosperous and holy nation that would commend to all other nations the God they obeyed and the truths by which they lived. Without this discipline their going to the promised land would have been a failure. So it is that God leads us in strange ways toward heaven, in order that we may be fitted for heaven's joys and heaven's duties. — *P.*

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. We are on a journey through this wilderness world to heaven.
2. We are of ourselves ignorant of the way. The future is unknown to us. We need a wise guide who knows all things, who can see the present and the future events.
3. We are weak amid unknown enemies, dangers, and temptations. We need a strong guide.
4. We are sinful, full of imperfections and mistakes. We need a good and loving guide.
5. Jesus Christ is such a guide, — loving, strong, and wise.
6. The Bible is the pillar of cloud where God is made manifest.
7. The Holy Spirit is the pillar of fire, enlightening, cheering, purifying, life-giving.
8. God leads us in strange ways, but it is all to prepare us for an eternity in his heaven.
9. "Let us ever defer to divine guidance, and we shall not fail to be led in the right way; we shall be protected as under the shadow of omnipotence; we shall be relieved of a thousand anxious cares which will be sure to spring up in the attempt to order our own footsteps; and we shall enjoy the sweet inward assurance that all things are working together for our good, as those that love God and put their trust in him."

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

INTRODUCTORY. The change in the books we study. The close of the giving of ceremonial law. The preparations for a new start. Why we go back to the time of setting up the tabernacle.

SUBJECT, — OUR GUIDE ON THE JOURNEY OF LIFE.

I. THE JOURNEY OF LIFE. The great and terrible wilderness through which the Israelites were to pass (Deut. 8: 15); where they were going; the unknown future; the kind of guide they needed. We on the way to heaven; through an unknown way, with pleasures, dangers, temptations. No one can find the way of himself. The kind of Guide we need.

Illustration. *The Sermon in Mammoth Cave.* Mammoth Cave is a labyrinth of winding paths, 200 miles in length, in different stories one below another. On every side there are dangers and pitfalls, — here the Bottomless Pit, there the Maelstrom, here Scylla, and there Charybdis, there “the black hole” and the Dead Sea. The darkness is absolute; it can almost be felt. No one can find his way without a guide. If left behind it is not safe to move. A friend once got left behind, and was alone in the dark, and the twenty minutes seemed an eternity. Some of our party lingered behind, and then we heard them calling to us that they had lost their way. We could see their lights, and hear their voices, but they did not know the way to us. After we had gone some little distance into its depths, we came to a hall called the Methodist Church. Here one of the guides mounted a high rock and called our attention to a short sermon he wished to preach. The sermon was, “Keep close to your guide, and you are safe.” And we soon found that the only safety was in giving careful heed to the guide’s sermon. And we found, too, that the best place was near the guide, where we could hear most plainly what he said. So Paul was safe in following close to Christ, in hearing his voice, and obeying his word. There was peace and light as well as safety. — *P.*

II. THE GUIDE: THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND OF FIRE (vers. 15-23): as given in the notes.

III. THE STRANGE GUIDANCE. **Illustration.** It is as necessary to prepare us for heaven when we get there as it is to lead us there. We must not only go to college, but be fitted for college. Some young men are ruined by their parents taking them into business with them, and then taking upon themselves all the responsibility, making all the decisions. One cannot learn business without the burden, the work, the responsibility.

IV. NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT ON OLD TESTAMENT THEMES. Christ our light and guide (John 1: 4, 5, 9, 17, 18). Like the pillar of cloud and of fire (Heb. 1: 3). Christ the way (John 14: 6). He has sent the Holy Spirit to be an ever-present guide (John 14: 16, 17; 16: 7, 13). His word our guide (2 Tim. 3: 15, 16; 2 Pet. 1: 18-21). Led into trials and troubles, to fit us for everlasting life (2 Cor. 4: 17, 18; Jas. 1: 2, 3; 1 Pet. 1: 7, 8). He brings good out of ill (Rom. 8: 28; 1 Cor. 10: 13).

Illustration. *The Labyrinth.* The evangelist Hammond was once visiting the Labyrinth of Henry VIII. in England. This labyrinth is like the ones the children often use as a puzzle, only the paths are all between high hedges. When it was time for Mr. Hammond to go, he could not find his way out. Whichever way he turned, he came to the end of the path. At last he looked up and saw a man in a high tower which overlooked the whole labyrinth. This man said: “I have been waiting for you to look up to me. Turn this way, now that, then here,” — and soon the lost man was free. So Jesus is above us. He can see all of life, the past and the future; where every path leads, where our work and our battles are to be. He is our true guide, because he is divine and knows all things; is strong and can do all things; is patient and loving. — *P.*

LESSON X. — SEPTEMBER 2.

THE SPIES SENT INTO CANAAN. — NUM. 13: 17-33.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.* — NUM. 13: 30.

TIME. — July-August, B.C. 1490, the time of the first ripe grapes (ver. 20), when the spies were sent out. They were gone forty days.

PLACE. — At this time the Israelites were encamped at Kadesh Barnea, just south of the southern border of Palestine. The place is now called Ain Qadees, “the holy well.” Kadesh means “the holy,” the sanctuary, and Barnea, “the desert of wandering.” It is fifty miles south of Beersheba.

PARALLEL ACCOUNT. — Deut. 1: 1-26.

PRONUNCIATIONS. — Ahī'mān; Am'ālēkites; A'nāk; Ar'ābāh; Bēēr'shēbā, or Bēershe'bā; Cā'nāan (Kā'nān); Esh'cōl (Es'kōl); Hā'māth; Hāzē'rōth; Jēb'ūsites; Kā'dēsh Bār'nēā; Kib'rōth-Hāttā'āvāh; Pā'rān; Qā'dēes, or Qā'dis; Rē'hōb; Rith'māh; Sī'nāi (Sī'nā), or Sī'nāi; Shē'shāi (Shē'shā); Tāl'māi (Tāl'mā); Tēeh or Tīh; Zin.

INTRODUCTION.

In our last lesson we came to the preparations for Sinai, and the announcement of the plan of divine guidance through the unknown wilderness to the promised land. About a month before they started, just a year after the institution of the Passover at the Exodus, the Passover was celebrated before Mt. Sinai. The work of discipline, of law-giving, of religious instruction to be accomplished at Sinai was now complete, and the time had come for the people to move on in their journey.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Journey from Sinai to Kadesh Barnea.—THE START. On the 20th day of the second month, almost a year after their arrival at Sinai, the pillar of cloud rose from the tabernacle and led the people from the valley of Er Rahah northwesterly down into the wilderness of Paran. The valley was about 5000 feet above the level of the sea, and therefore the march was on a descending grade. The distance to the heart of the promised land was only about 200 miles in a direct line, and men with ordinary camels can reach Kadesh Barnea from Sinai on the southern borders of Palestine in ten to eleven days, and on dromedaries in five days.—*Trumbull*.

THE NUMBERS. A census (Num. 1 and 2) was taken of the men from twenty years of age and upwards, showing as the result a grand total of 603,550, exclusive of the tribe of Levi (22,000), and thus indicating an aggregate, in the whole host, of from two to three million souls. This vast crowd of human beings of all ages, and of both sexes; the trains of beasts and wagons, with tents and baggage; the herds and flocks, in long-drawn succession—would fill all the ravines, far and near, which pointed all in the same direction, and the progress made must have been equally slow and painful.—*Geikie*.

THE FIRST MARCH was a three days' journey into the wilderness of Paran, the modern desert of Teeh (or Tih), to Kibroth-Hattaavah, "the graves of gluttony." Here Professor Palmer found the remains of an ancient camp surrounded by an immense number of graves.

MURMURING AND ITS PUNISHMENT. Here the people fell to murmuring, and a fire consumed many. Then the mixed multitude who came from Egypt led off in further complaints about their food. God sent quails in great numbers, but in their gluttony many died by a great plague. Hence the name of the place (Num. 11).

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. The people left Egypt the year before, a mere crowd of fugitive slaves, with only the rudiments of national organization, and the dimmest religious ideas. But the interval had affected an immense change. They were an organized people, with laws, a constitution or covenant, a priesthood, a religious ritual, and house of worship. But more was needed in the continually new circumstances, and seventy elders and leading men were appointed to aid Moses in the government. This was, as the Rabbis believe, the original of the Sanhedrim (Num. 11: 24-26). In Deut. (1: 15), Moses speaks of a further organization of captains of thousands, captains of hundreds, and of fifties, and of tens.

THE REBELLION OF MIRIAM AND AARON. The second station of the march was Hazeroth "the place of enclosures." Here Miriam,—the sister of Moses, to whom, under God, he had owed his preservation in infancy,—apparently bore a grudge at Zipporah, his wife, as a "Cushite," and therefore of impure blood. Persuading herself at last that such a union disqualified Moses for his great position as Leader, and jealous of his being the exclusive mouthpiece of God to the host, when she herself was a "prophetess," she induced Aaron to join her in claiming that they also should be honored by sharing divine revelations. But a leprosy, divinely inflicted, instantly checked her ambition.—*Geikie*. On their repentance, and at Moses' earnest prayer, the leprosy was removed.

ARRIVAL AT KADESH BARNEA. The third encampment was at Kadesh Barnea, in the wilderness of Paran (Num. 12: 16; 13: 26). Its earlier name was Rithmah, "the place of broom," the desert shrub (Num. 33: 18). It was called Kadesh, "the holy," after the sanctuary reposed there.

KADESH BARNEA, "the holy place in the desert of wandering," lies about 50 miles south of Beersheba, between the Arabah and the Mediterranean Sea, just below the ridge which is the natural southern boundary of Palestine. Dr. Trumbull, by a personal visit, identified the ancient Kadesh with the modern Ain Qadees. He says it is the strategic stronghold on the southern border of Canaan. Here are two wells and a large pool, and the stream flowing from a rock. The Wady Qadees is an extensive, hill-encircled plain, several miles wide,

17. And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, get you up this ¹way southward,^a and go up ²into the mountain:

18. And see the land, what it *is*; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they *be* strong or weak, few or many;

19. And what the land *is* that they dwell in, whether it *be* good or bad; and what cities *they be* that they dwell in, whether in tents,^b or in strong holds;

20. And what the land *is*, whether it *be* ³fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And ⁴be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time *was* the time of the first ripe grapes.

21. So they went up, and searched^c the land ⁵from the wilderness of Zin unto ⁶Rehob, as men^d come to Hamath.

Rev. Ver.: *a.* by the South; *b.* camps; *c.* spied out; *d.* to the entering in of Hamath.

¹ Num. 13: 21.

² Gen. 14: 10. Judg. 1: 9, 19.

³ Neh. 9: 25, 35. Ezek. 34: 14.

⁴ Deut. 31: 6, 7, 23.

⁵ Num. 34: 3.

Josh. 15: 1. ⁶ Josh. 19: 28.

with shrubs and flowers and grass and water, with abundant room for the encampment of Israel. It was the central point of the people for nearly thirty-eight years (see *Kadesh Barnea*).

II. The Command to take Possession of the Promised Land.—Deut. 1: 20, 21. The Israelites were now right on the southern border of the land that was promised to them, and Moses commanded them in the name of the Lord their God to go up and take possession. They had only to trust God and go forward, and in less than two years from leaving Egypt the land would have been theirs. The God who had delivered them with a mighty hand, who had made a path through the sea, who had rained manna, and brought water from a rock, and spoken from Sinai, and entered into covenant with them and was leading them by his visible presence, — he bade them go up and take possession of the promised land. They should have trusted and obeyed.

III. The Expedition of the Twelve Spies.—Vers. 17-25. This expedition was undertaken at the request of the people in general (Deut. 1: 22) as a matter of worldly precaution, but not of faith in God.

17. And Moses sent them: for he says that he was pleased with the proposal (Deut. 1: 23), this, in the present state of the people's feelings and faith, being the best thing possible. The names of these spies are given in the first part of the chapter. There was one leading man from each tribe. It was the custom in ancient times to send chief men on such expeditions, as being wiser and stronger than others, and adding weight to the report. **Get you up this way southward:** rather "by the negeb, or south country" (from *nagav* "to be dry"); a well-defined tract of territory forming the southernmost and least fertile portion of the land of Canaan and of the subsequent inheritance of Judah. It extended northward from Kadesh to within a few miles of Hebron, and from the Dead Sea westward to the Mediterranean (see especially Josh. 15: 47, 62). — *Cook*. **Into the mountain:** the hill country, or mountainous part of Canaan on the borders of which was Kadesh.

18. And see the land. That is, survey, inspect it, with minute attention. Ascertain all you can of its situation, inhabitants, soil. — *Bush*.

19. Whether in tents (*i.e.*, open villages and camps), **or in strong holds:** walled cities and strongholds.

20. The time of the first ripe grapes. The first grapes ripen in Palestine in July and August: the vintage is gathered in September and October. — *Cook*.

THE OBJECT of this expedition was (1) to learn what were the attractions of the country; (2) the difficulties in the way of taking possession; (3) the best ways of reaching the country; (4) the preparations it was necessary to make.

21. From the wilderness of Zin. The name of the wilderness of Zin, in which Kadesh was situated, appears to have been given to the northern or northeastern part of the wilderness of Paran. — *Canon C. J. Elliott*. **Unto Rehob:** the Beth-rehob of Judges (18: 28), near Dan-Laish and the sources of the Jordan at the foot of Mt. Hermon. **As men come to Hamath:** or, "the entering in of Hamath" (2 Kings, 14: 25), now the valley of Balbeck, a mountain pass or opening in the northern frontier, which formed the extreme limit in that direction of the inheritance of Israel (Num. 34: 8). — *J., F. and B.* The verse is simply a way of saying that they searched the land from south to north in its whole extent.

22. And they ascended^e by the south, and came unto Hebron; where¹ Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, ²the children of Anak, *were*. (Now³ Hebron was built seven years before⁴ Zoan in Egypt.)

23. ⁵And they came unto the brook^g of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and *they brought* of the pomegranates, and of the figs.

24. The place was called the brook^g Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence.

25. And they returned from searching^h of the land after forty days.

26. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, ⁶unto the wilderness of Paran, to ⁷Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.

Rev. Ver.: e. went up by the South; g. valley; h. spying out. ¹ Josh. 11: 21, 22; 15: 13, 14. Judg. 1: 10.
² Num. 13: 33. ³ Josh. 21: 11. ⁴ Ps. 78: 12. Isa. 19: 11; 30: 4. ⁵ Deut. 1: 24, 25. ⁶ Num. 13: 3.
⁷ Num. 20: 1, 16; 32: 8; 33: 36. Deut. 1: 19. Josh. 14: 6.

22. By the south: the Negeb, the south country, *on their way home*. And came unto Hebron. The verb is in the singular number in the Hebrew text: *he came*. It is quite possible that the twelve spies may not always have been together, and that only one may have gone to Hebron.—*Ellicott*. In this case it would appear from Josh. 14: 9, 12, 14, Caleb was more especially intended, as Hebron afterwards fell to his inheritance on the ground of his having now visited it.—*Bush*. Ahiman, etc. Probably names of tribes, not of individual warriors. Children of Anak. Anak was the son of Arba, from whom Hebron received the name of Kirjath-arba. He was the head of one of the chief families of Canaan, being distinguished for their great stature, prowess, and valor. So formidable were they on these accounts that it became a proverbial saying in that region, "Who can stand before the children of Anak?" (Deut. 9: 2)—*Bush*.

23. They came unto the brook Eshcol. This is generally identified with the rich valley immediately to the north of Hebron; described by Robinson as producing the largest and best grapes in all Palestine, besides pomegranates, figs, apricots, quinces, and other fruits, in abundance.—*Cook*. One cluster of grapes, and . . . bare it between two upon a staff. Single clusters are mentioned weighing ten or twelve pounds. Tobler speaks of individual grapes as large as plums. Kitto (*Phys. Hist. of Palestine*, p. 330) states that a bunch of grapes of enormous size was produced at Welbeck from a Syrian vine, and sent as a present in 1819 from the Duke of Portland to the Marquis of Rockingham. It weighed nineteen pounds, and was conveyed to its destination, more than twenty miles distant, on a staff by four laborers, two of whom bore it in rotation.—*Cook*. The arrangement referred to in the text was probably made, not because the weight was too great for one person to carry, but in order to prevent the grapes from being crushed.—*Ellicott*. Pomegranates: "grained apple"; a large bush of the myrtle family bearing a fruit like a large apple, of beautiful brown-red color, and of a highly grateful flavor. The juice was used as a cooling drink.

24. Called . . . Eshcol: i.e., cluster or bunch.

25. And they returned. The Egyptian records show that there was then frequent communication between Egypt and Syria. This enables us to understand how it was possible for twelve Hebrews to spy out the land without interruption. They had simply to assume the character of Egyptians, from which country they had lately come.—*Land and Book*.

IV. The Report of the Spies.—Vers. 26-33. 26. Unto all the congregation.



POMEGRANATES.

27. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sendest us, and surely it floweth with ¹milk and honey; ²and this *is* the fruit of it.

28. Nevertheless ³the people *be* strong that dwell in the land, and the cities *are* walled,⁴ and very great: and moreover we saw ⁴the children of Anak there.

29. ⁵The Amalekites^k dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and ¹by the coast of Jordan.

30. And ⁶Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

31. ⁷But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they *are* stronger than we.

32. And they ⁸brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched^m unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to searchⁿ it, *is* a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and ⁹all the people that we saw in it *are* men of a great stature.

Rev. Ver.: *i.* Howbeit; *j.* fenced; *k.* Amalek dwelleth, *so the* Hittite, etc.; *l.* and along by the side of; *m.* spied out; *n.* to spy it out. ¹ Ex. 3: 8; 33: 3. ² Deut. 1: 25. ³ Deut. 1: 28; 9: 1, 2. ⁴ Num. 13: 33. ⁶ Ex. 17: 8. Num. 14: 43. Judg. 6: 3. ¹ Sam. 14: 48; 15: 3. ⁶ Num. 14: 6, 24. Josh. 14: 7. ⁷ Num. 32: 9. Deut. 1: 28. Josh. 14: 8. ⁸ Num. 14: 36, 37. ⁹ Amos 2: 9.

The report was made publicly. **Shewed them the fruit of the land.** The display of the rich fruit formed of itself an emphatically good report of the land, as to natural advantages and productiveness; and this was confirmed by the verbal statements of the spies.—*Bush*.

27. **Floweth with milk and honey:** according to God's promise (Ex. 3: 8). This was a poetic expression for great fertility.

28. **Nevertheless the people be strong.** They were large, active, and trained to war. They seemed not only strong, but stronger than the Israelites (ver. 31). They were of great stature (ver. 32). **The cities are walled:** large and well fortified, and the Israelites had no means of warfare with which to capture them. **Children of Anak there.** In ver. 33 they are called giants, in whose presence the spies seemed like grasshoppers. "It is probable the Anakim were a distinguished family, or perhaps a select body of warriors, chosen for their extraordinary size."—*J., F. and B.* We have no means of judging of the actual size of these men, unless the height assigned to Goliath (six cubits and a span—10 or 11 feet) be allowed to them. Probably men of this stature were quite exceptional even among the Anakim.—*Cook*.

29. **Amalekites:** who dwelt on the borders of the "south country," and who had already attacked them once (Ex. 17: 8-16). These were the first enemies to be overcome. **The Hittites:** a great, a warlike nation, whose remains have lately been discovered. They extend over a wide reach of country. **The Jebusites.** These held the region about Jerusalem. These were the most formidable of all the native population.—*Bush*. They held the citadel of Jerusalem even till the time of David. **The Amorites:** mountaineers. Of the Amorites, we find the Lord saying through the prophet Amos (2: 9), "Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks."—*Bush*. **Canaanites:** lowlanders. **Coast:** borders.

32. **A land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof.** Either (1) a land of scarcity, unable to support its inhabitants; or (2) an unhealthy land; or (3) full of strife and discord, and war among the tribes contending for supremacy within it.

THE EVIL REPORT FROM THE MAJORITY OF TEN. There seems to have been no difference of opinion as to the facts of the case. The two faithful ones did not contradict the facts. Wherein, then, was the report of the majority an evil report (ver. 32)? Why did Caleb need to quiet the people before Moses (ver. 30)? (1) Because they laid emphasis on the dangers and obstacles, and minimized the good. Their fears exaggerated and distorted the facts, so as to give a false impression. (2) Because it was the fruit of unbelief. It left God and his promises out of the account, and yet this was the largest factor. "They occupied themselves with their difficulties instead of God and his resources." Hence their report is called "a slander upon the land" (Num. 14: 36). (3) It imparted a spirit of

33. And there we saw the giants,^o ¹the sons of Anak, *which* come of the giants^o: and we were in our own sight ²as grasshoppers, and so we were ³in their sight.

Rev. Ver.: o, Nephilim.

¹ Deut. 1: 28; 2: 10; 9: 2.

² Isa. 40: 22.

³ 1 Sam. 17: 42.

fear and discouragement, throwing all their personal influence on that side. For who would seem to be as good judges of what was possible as those who had been through the land?

THE PUNISHMENT. The ten spies were smitten by a plague and died. And of the people who were led astray by their discouraging report, no one was permitted to enter the promised land.

THE GOOD REPORT FROM THE MINORITY OF TWO (ver. 30). By Caleb and Joshua (Num. 14: 38). This report was good (1) because it took the facts as they were, seeing both the value of the land and the difficulties in the way of possession. It looked not only on the bright side, nor only on the dark side, but on both sides. (2) Because it was a report of faith. It remembered God's promises. It took account of what God had already done in Egypt and at the Red Sea and at Sinai, and how he had delivered them out of far greater dangers than any now before them. (3) It was a good report because it threw their whole personal influence on the side of faith and courage and hope and religion and God.

The Reward. Caleb and Joshua both lived to enter the promised land. Caleb received as his possession Hebron, the very place he searched as a spy, where were the best fruits and the strongest enemies. Joshua had his name changed from Oshea, a prayer, "the Lord save," to Jehoshua, "the Lord saves."

MODERN APPLICATIONS. (1) God is leading us toward the promised land of holiness and heavenly blessedness. (2) We are commanded to go up and possess the land now, and not wait for a long and dreary journey through the wilderness of sin. (3) It is unbelief, — the lack of courage which comes from the lack of faith, — that delays our going to the promised land. (4) Every Christian has explored the land and brings back some kind of report as to what the land is. (5) He brings these reports by what he says and by what he does. He brings to the world clusters of the fruits. (6) The true Christian life is a land of promise and of fulfilment; a land with the great clusters of Eshcol, rich, luscious, and abundant fruits, — heavenly experiences, love, joy, peace, faith, long-suffering, charity, and every good. (7) But there are difficulties in the way of obtaining these blessings, — giants of evil, of passion, of selfishness, of intemperance; enemies entrenched in walled cities of custom, prejudice, sinful hearts, wealth, fashion. (8) Those make a good report who see these enemies as well as the blessedness of the land, but also see the power and the love of God which can give strength to overcome them; and who prove that the enemies can be overcome by overcoming them; and who also shows by his holy life, and deeds of love, how good the land is. (9) Those make an evil report who see the enemies more clearly than the goodness of the land, and than the power and love of God; who magnify the evils and belittle the blessings; who have little faith in God, and forget all his wondrous works in the past; and who, by their sinful and imperfect lives and ceaseless complaints, declare that God cannot conquer evil for them. (10) Those who bring a good report to the world are blessed by inheriting the very blessings of which they have had a foretaste. (11) Those who bring an evil report are punished by being excluded from that land of blessings which they had not faith to conquer. (12) God gives us foretastes of the blessedness of heaven to encourage us on our way. (13) Every real good, like success, education, usefulness, has great difficulties and many enemies in the way, but also sends forward to those seeking specimens of its grapes of Eshcol, and blessed fruits.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Trumbull's *Kadesh Barnea*, settles the location of Kadesh, and gives much valuable and interesting information; *The Land and the Book*, new ed., vol. i., on vineyards, grapes, 277-279; pomegranates, p. 284; giants, 250-252; vol. iii., p. 301, on why the spies were permitted to pass unmolested; Robert's *Oriental Illustrations*; Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*; McGarvey's *Lands of the Bible*, on Hebron, pp. 247, 490; Wilton's *The Negeb*, or South country; Edersheim's *Wanderings in the Wilderness*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

See that the scholars read the account in Deut. 1. NOTE the preparations in our last lesson for departure from Sinai. How long the people had been there.

SUBJECT, — REPORTS FROM THE CHRISTIAN'S PROMISED LAND.

I. THE JOURNEY TO THE BORDER OF THE PROMISED LAND. The start; the numbers; the wilderness march; incidents by the way; Kadesh Barnea; on the border; the length of time they were on the way.

II. THE EXPEDITION OF THE SPIES (vers. 17-25), and the fruits they brought home.

III. THE REPORT OF THE SPIES (vers. 26-33). The blessedness of the land; the dangers in the way. Wherein the report of the ten was evil. The difference between that and the good report. What God had promised, and what he had done in the past.

Illustration. Two ways of looking at the same things. People often look at the good through the small end of the telescope, and the evil through the large end, diminishing the good as they enlarge the evil.

Illustration. The spies left God out of the account; as if one, in considering what a steam engine could do, should leave the steam out of the account; or the electricity out of the account in looking at an electric-light lamp.

Illustration. Professor Proctor, in his *Familiar Science Studies*, tells of an Oriental monarch who dreamed that he had lost all his teeth. He applied to one of his wise men for an interpretation, who said that the dream foretold that all his relatives would die one by one before he did, and the king slew the interpreter for his bad report. The next wise man interpreted the dream to mean that the king would outlive all his relations, and this man was exalted to the highest place in the kingdom. So the same thing brings life or death by our way of looking it.

IV. NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT ON OLD TESTAMENT THEMES. Our promised land (Heb. 11: 13-16). The blessedness of religion (John 14: 27; Phil. 4: 7). Every professing Christian is bringing some report of his religion (2 Cor. 3: 2, 3; Matt. 5: 14). The Christians' grapes of Eshcol (Gal. 5: 22, 23). The enemies in the way (Eph. 6: 12; Jas. 1: 2, 13, 14). How we may make an evil report. Our duty of making a good report.

Illustration. Mr. Spurgeon tells a story of a man who was invited to come into an orchard and eat some of the fruit. He refused, for he said that he had picked up some of the apples by the roadside that fell from those trees, and they were poor and bitter. The owner replied that those trees were placed there on purpose, so that the boys would not be attracted into the orchard to steal. But come inside, and there the apples are delicious. The application is obvious to the fruits of the religious experience.

LESSON XI. — SEPTEMBER 9.

THE UNBELIEF OF THE PEOPLE. — NUM. 14: 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*
— **HEB.** 3: 19.

TIME. — August-September, B.C. 1490. Soon after the return of the spies.

PLACE. — Kadesh Barnea, just below the southern border of Canaan. The place is now called Ain Qadees, or Kadis. It was here that the Israelites had their headquarters for thirty-seven years' wandering in the wilderness.

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. — **HEB.** 3: 7-19.

CALEB'S REVIEW. — **JOSEPH.** 14: 6-14.

MOSES' REVIEW. — **DEUT.** 1: 19-46.

MOSES was 81 years old at this time, **CALEB** was 40 years old (**JOSEPH.** 14: 7), and **JOSHUA** was 46 (comp. **JOSEPH.** 24: 29; B.C. 1426).

EXPLANATORY.

I. **The Circumstances: a Review.** — The children of Israel were on the very borders of their promised land. The command had been given them to go up and take possession under the guidance and by the power of their God. But their faith was feeble, and they were afraid to go till some one had gone before and looked over the resources of

1. And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and ¹the people wept that night.

2. ²And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or ³would God we had died in this wilderness!

¹ Num. 11: 4.² Ex. 16: 2; 17: 3. Num. 16: 41. Ps. 106: 25.³ Num. 14: 28, 29.

the country, and the difficulties in the way of conquering it. Accordingly twelve of their chief men had gone through the length and breadth of the land, and had brought back a glowing report of the richness of the country, together with specimens of its fruits; while at the same time the country was defended by warlike races, some of them giants in stature, defended by fortified strongholds. Two of the spies declared that they could go up immediately and conquer the land; for God had doomed the inhabitants on account of their great wickedness, and himself would lead them on to victory; and he had proved his power in many an instance within the preceding two years. The other ten spies, frightened themselves, inspired fear in the people. They forgot God and all his glorious deeds, and assured the people that it would be impossible for them to take the fortified cities, or withstand the attack of giants in whose presence they seemed like grasshoppers. At this point our lesson begins.

II. Unbelief, shown by Murmuring and Rebellion. — Vers. 1-5. 1. And **all**: the movement was universal, — Moses, Aaron, Caleb, and Joshua being the only known exceptions, and they were not counted among the congregation. **Lifted up their voice, and cried**: in loud wailing, by which the masses of the Orientals are still accustomed to express their disappointment and sorrow. — *Johnson*. From the force of the expression, therefore, it is evident that the people on this occasion broke forth into open outcries of a rebellious nature, proclaiming thereby their own fickleness, cowardice, imbecility, and shame. Instead of lifting up their ensigns with a heroic resolve to march forward to the land of promise, defying all enemies in the name of the Lord, they sat down in impotent despair, and like so many frightened and fretting children, gave way to sobs and tears. — *Bush*. The rods of their Egyptian taskmasters had never been so fit for them as now for crying. They had cause, indeed, to weep for their infidelity; but now they weep for fear of those enemies they saw not. — *Bishop Hall*. **And the people wept that night**: Hebrew, *in or through* that night.

2. **The children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron**. In murmuring against their leaders they murmured against God, by whom those leaders were appointed. This is clear from the language of Moses (Ex. 16: 8). — *Bush*.

OBSERVE how one sin led to another: first, there was disappointment proceeding from unbelief in the promise and power of Jehovah (ver. 1); then murmuring against their divinely appointed leaders (ver. 2); then murmuring against Jehovah (ver. 3); then the appointment of their own leaders, and the formal institution of a rebellious movement to return to Egypt (vers. 3, 4); and, finally, the determination to kill those who had brought a truthful report from the land (ver. 10). Had they committed this crime, they would have proceeded further to kill Moses himself. — *Johnson*. **Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt!** The more carefully the language of these malcontents is weighed, the more aggravated does it appear. They were wrought up by their disaffection to a point of absolute madness. They speak as if it had been actually better that they had been slain with the first-born in Egypt, or in the wilderness with those who had lately died of the plague for lusting, than run the hazard of holding on their way to Canaan. They forgot that Omnipotence could bring them in thither as triumphantly as it had brought them out of Egypt. The past, with all its miracles of mercy, is hidden from their eyes, and the dreadful future, painted by unbelief, is all that stands before them. Never had people been so honored, favored, and blest, as had the nation of Israel since their departure out of Egypt, and yet, so light is all this in their eyes, that they now mourn that they had not died before they had experienced it! — *Bush*. They wish rather to die criminals under God's justice, than live conquerors in his favor. How base were the spirits of those degenerate Israelites, who, rather than die (if it come to the worst) like soldiers in the field of honor, with their swords in their hands, desire to die like rotten sheep in the wilderness! — *Henry*. Who can wonder that, as appears from the sequel (vers. 28, 29), they soon had their wish? — *Bush*.

3. And wherefore hath^a the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children^b should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

4. And they said one to another, ¹Let us make a captain, and ²let us return into Egypt.

5. Then ³Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

Rev. Ver.: a. doth the LORD bring; b. little ones.

¹ Neh. 9: 17.

² Deut. 17: 16.

Acts 7: 39.

³ Num. 16: 4, 22.

3. And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land. They now murmur directly against their God, as before they had indirectly. They blasphemously reflect upon their Divine Benefactor, as if he had brought them hither *on purpose* that they might fall by the sword. The parallel history (Deut. 1: 27) gives us still more distinctly the language they uttered on this occasion: "Because the Lord hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt."—*Bush*. "Thus do they in effect charge that God who is Love itself, with the worst of malice, and Eternal Truth with the basest hypocrisy; suggesting that all the kind things he had said to them, and done for them, hitherto, were intended only to decoy them, and to cover a secret design carried on all along to ruin them."—*Henry*. That our wives and our children should be a prey? Unbelief always tries to find some pious excuse for its opposition to God; and especially is it prone to plead humanity in opposition to religion, as if they were not one.—*Johnson*.

4. Let us make a captain: a leader in place of Moses. Nehemiah, a thousand years later, says that "they appointed a captain to return to their bondage" (Neh. 9: 16, 17). Their conduct was no less than a formal renunciation of the divine authority.

5. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces: in prayer to God in this great emergency. It was a public recognition of God. It would awaken the Israelites to a sense of their own duty, and of their sin and danger. It would show the people the confidence of their leaders in Jehovah. "Previous to this, Caleb had endeavored in vain to quell the rising mob-spirit (Num. 13: 30), and Moses had seconded his effort (Deut. 1: 29 ff.).—*Johnson*. Fell on their faces: a defenceless attitude before men, but the attitude of strength before God. Falling on the face expressed the utmost ardor and importunity of prayer, as we learn by the example of our Lord himself (Matt. 26: 39; Luke 22: 41). The reason of this is, that true humiliation of heart prompts corresponding outward gestures.—*Bush*.

MURMURING. 1. Murmuring is a sign and a fruit of unbelief in God's promises and goodness. 2. Murmuring is on the high road to rebellion. It is the deepening twilight of the rebellious spirit. 3. It is a most wretched, unhappy spirit. There is no comfort, no joy, no sunlight in it. It abides in the lurid shadow of the pit. 4. It is as useless as it is wretched. It removes no evils, but intensifies them. It turns away from every source of help.

THE CREDULITY OF UNBELIEF. Some one has said, "O infidel, great is thy faith!" i.e., credulity. The Israelites could not believe in God, to trust him to lead them on into the promised land, on whose borders they stood; but they could trust themselves and a leader of their own choosing, to lead them back through the great and terrible wilderness in which they would long ago have perished but for God's miraculous providence. And a few days later on they showed the same spirit, when, ashamed of their cowardice, and stung by their punishment for it, they went up to conquer the Canaanites contrary to God's command, and without his presence; the very thing they had not faith to do with his command and his almighty power. And they suffered a disgraceful defeat (Num. 14: 39-45). Unbelief is always credulous. Those who cannot believe in the inspiration of the Bible, will trust imitation messages from unknown spirits. Those who cannot trust God, will follow their own wisdom. Those who will not see the light which Christ brought into the world, will trust their own wishes and hopes.

OTHER LESSONS. 1. Unbelief is noisy, cowardly, and weak. 2. There are many giants in our way, — giants of intemperance, infidelity, crime, ignorance, oppression. But unbelief never conquered a single one. 3. "According to your faith it shall be done unto you." They would not believe that God could bring them safely into the promised land, and God took them at their word: they never entered it. 4. Unbelief is the short and straight road

6. ¹And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *which were* of them that searched^e the land, rent their clothes :

7. And they spake unto all the company^d of the children of Israel, saying, ²The land, which we passed through to search^e it, *is* an exceeding good land.

8. If the LORD ³delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us ; ⁴a land which floweth with milk and honey.

9. Only ⁵rebel not ye against the LORD, ⁶neither fear ye the people of the land ; for ⁷they *are* bread for us : their defence is departed⁹ from them, ⁸and the LORD *is* with us : fear them not.

Rev. Ver.: *c.* spied out; *d.* congregation; *e.* to spy it out; *g.* is removed from over them. ¹ Num. 13: 6, 8; 14: 24, 30, 38. ² Num. 13: 27. Deut. 1: 25. ³ Deut. 10: 15. 2 Sam. 22: 20. 1 Kings 10: 9. Ps. 147: 10, 11. Isa. 62: 4. ⁴ Num. 13: 27. ⁵ Deut. 9: 7, 23, 24. ⁶ Deut. 7: 18; 20: 3. ⁷ Num. 24: 8. ⁸ Gen. 48: 21. Ex. 33: 16. Deut. 20: 1, 3, 4; 31: 6, 8. Josh. 1: 5. 2 Chron. 15: 2. Ps. 46: 7. Isa. 41: 10. Zech. 8: 23.

to failure. 5. Unbelief is wretched and gloomy, and unhappy. It has no songs, but only wailings. 6. Prayer is the true resource in the hour of trouble, — earnest, humble, unselfish prayer. 7. But with the prayer we should do all in our power.

8. "Oh, how many a glorious record
Had the angels of me kept,
Had I done instead of doubted,
Had I wept instead of wept."

III. The Two Faithful, but Unpopular, Minority. — Vers. 6-10. 6. Joshua . . . Caleb: The two spies who brought a good report. See last lesson. **Rent their clothes.** This was done by grasping the outer robe at the back of the neck, with both hands, and rending it downward. It was a customary mark of strong indignation (Acts 14: 14), or of deep mourning (2 Sam. 1: 11); here it was dictated by both feelings. — *Johnson.*

7. And they spake unto all the company. Nothing could well be a stronger proof of their undaunted courage and incorruptible fidelity than daring thus, in the face of so vast a multitude, to bear a testimony directly opposite to that which had been given by the faithless spies (*Bush*), and which the people unanimously accepted as truth.

THEIR ARGUMENT. (1) **An exceeding good land:** and therefore worth every effort to obtain it. The two would conquer the fear of the multitude by hope.

(2) **8. If the Lord delight in us.** Their next point was the ability of Israel to conquer it. This ability they found, not in the people, but in Jehovah, who had led his children thus far in safety. — *Johnson.*

(3) The danger of refusing to go. 9. **Only rebel not ye against the Lord:** revolt, be apostates, by refusing to trust him and to obey his commands. They were not safe a moment where they were, without the Lord's favor; and the Lord as their enemy was a thousand-fold more dangerous than the giants of Hebron.

(4) The defenceless condition of the inhabitants. **For they are bread for us:** that is, we shall devour and consume them as a hungry man does bread. As if they should say: We seemed, indeed, but as grasshoppers to them; but we say unto you that they shall be bread for us; we shall utterly destroy them. — *Bush.* **Their defence is departed from them.** The original Hebrew is far more expressive: "Their shadow, or shade, has departed from them;" that is, their defence, covert, protection. The force of this and other similar allusions in the Bible is in a great degree lost upon those who, under the scorching sun of the East, have not had occasion to experience that the shelter of some shady place is an enjoyment of such essential importance as to be only inferior in value and gratification to that of drink to one who is dried up with thirst under the same circumstances. — *Bush.* **Is departed from them.** We know not the nature of this defence, or protecting covert, whose shadow had been withdrawn. It may have been some foreign power whose alliance had ceased, or it may have been a condition of internal harmony among the many nations of Palestine, which had given place to dissension and war. Some circumstance in the political condition of the country is evidently referred to. We know from the Egyptian monuments that twenty-one years later the nations of Palestine were invaded by Egypt and greatly weakened, a providential preparation for the conquest by Joshua; and something analogous

10. ¹But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And ²the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle^a of the congregation before^c all the children of Israel.

Rev. Ver.: *h.* tent of meeting; *i.* unto. ¹ Ex. 17: 4. ² Ex. 16: 10; 24: 16, 17; 40: 34. Num. 16: 19, 42.

to this may have been discovered by the spies in the present instance. — *Johnson*. The departed defence was also, if not chiefly, the withdrawal of God's favor on account of their sins. The cup of their iniquity was full, and the time for their punishment had come. And the Lord is with us. It was *if* in ver. 8. Now he assures them of the fact. God's plans for the redemption of the world required the success of the Israelites.

THE ARGUMENT OF A BAD CAUSE. 10. But all the congregation bade stone them: said, *i.e.*, proposed. Though Moses and Aaron entreat upon their faces, and Joshua and Caleb persuade, yet they move nothing. The obstinate multitude, grown more violent with opposing, is ready to return them stones for their prayers. Such have ever been the thanks of fidelity and truth. Crossed wickedness proves desperate; and, instead of yielding, seeks for revenge. Nothing is so hateful to a resolute sinner as good counsel. — *Bishop Hall*. The glory of the Lord: some sudden outburst of dazzling light (from the cloudy pillar) which shone with a fierce and angry glow, bringing the riotous people at once to their senses. It came in answer to prayer (ver. 5), and just in time to preserve the lives of those who were most faithful. — *Johnson*. Before all the children of Israel: to awe them with the danger of the crime they were about to commit, to awaken their conscience, and to show them the terror of resisting the loving protection and gracious promises which had been granted them, and of rebelling against their God.

MODERN APPLICATIONS. 1. Work and prayer for a good cause must go together. 2. Stand up boldly for what is right and true, although it be in the face of the whole world. 3. Faith and pluck go together. 4. Kindly logical persuasion is the argument for a good cause. 5. Nothing is impossible when God is with us. 6. It is infinitely safer to have all the world our enemies, than to have God against us. 7. Violence is the argument of a weak, bad cause. 8. God appears in time to defend his children. 9. The manifest presence of a holy God awakens the conscience, convinces of sin, and tends to lead to repentance.

IV. The Fruits of Unbelief. — Out of the cloud which terrified the unbelieving multitude came the voice of God to Moses who was praying with Aaron. God proposed to Moses to destroy the Israelites with a pestilence, and make a new nation from Moses (vers. 11, 12).

THE INTERCESSION. But Moses interceded for the people with all his heart.

THE PARDON. God granted the people pardon, but it did not include relief from all the consequences of their sin. They were not disinherited; but they needed a long discipline before they would be fitted to inherit the promised land.

THE PUNISHMENT. Every person over 20 years of age must die before the nation could enter Canaan, and the people must endure a 40-years' discipline in the wilderness. Only the two faithful spies, of all the people, should see the land of promise. Their unbelief led to cowardice; cowardice to rebellion; rebellion to exclusion from their long-cherished hopes.

NOTE. FORGIVENESS does not remove all the consequences of sin. It restores to God's favor, it keeps us in the family of God, it removes some of the natural consequences of sin, but it does not remove them all. Some are needful for our discipline and growth.

NOTE. UNBELIEF keeps us from every promised land. It keeps us out of heaven; but it also keeps us from usefulness, from success, from goodness, from happiness.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

C. Robinson's *Memorial Pulpit*, vol. 1, "Faith and Failure" (contains many things both practical and illustrative); Hengstenberg's *Kingdom of God under the Old Test.*; Robertson's *Sermons*, vol. 3, p. 62, "The Victory of Faith," and p. 129, on Abraham's Faith; Julius C. Hare's *The Victory of Faith*; Marvin R. Vincent's *Faith and Character*; Henry Roger's *Reason and Faith*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

READ the corresponding accounts.

REVIEW the circumstances which are necessary for understanding this lesson. Make a vivid picture.

SUBJECT, — THE EFFECTS OF UNBELIEF.

I. FIRST EFFECT, — MURMURING AND REBELLION AGAINST GOD (vers. 1-5).

NOTE the many promises God had given them that he would conquer "the mightier nations" for them.

NOTE the wonders he had already performed, giving abundant reasons why they should believe him for the future.

THE MISUSE OF FACTS AND FIGURES was the outward cause of their discouragement. This misuse is very common.

Illustration. Some one stated in public not long ago, that the American Board had but one more missionary in 1885 than it had 30 years before. Thirty years to gain one missionary! What slow progress! The figures are true, and yet but a small part of the truth. For at the earlier date the Presbyterian Board and the American Board were united, so that really there are more than twice as many missionaries now as 30 years ago, but they are half of them under another name. Besides this, the American Board has 52 more female missionaries, and 1739 more native helpers than it had 30 years ago.

Illustration. Caught once in the mist and rain upon the top of Mount Washington, we gathered around the fire in the Tiptop House, and were looking over photographs of the views, when a stranger called my attention to a picture of the railroad train ascending the steep sides of the mountain, and gave me these facts. The artist had tipped his camera to make the ascent seem steeper than it really was, because the steeper the appearance, the greater the sale. A young clergyman reproved him for the deception, saying that every picture was a lie. The artist replied by offering to give him the picture which best expressed his *feelings* while riding in the car up the mountain; and he chose the one which showed the steepest grade. The facts were one thing; the feelings another. This was true of the Israelites on this occasion. It is often true in our own experience; and getting at the exact facts will often cure the exaggerated feelings.

II. SECOND EFFECT, — INSENSIBILITY TO REASON (vers. 6-9). Joshua's argument was perfect; but the people would not be reasonable.

Illustration. Moses and Aaron prayed, while Joshua and Caleb used the best means. Work and prayer were like the two wings of a bird, or the oars on each side of a boat. Only joined together is there success.

III. THIRD EFFECT, — PERSECUTION OF THE FAITHFUL (ver. 10). This is very common.

Illustration. While writing this lesson, I read in the *Independent* an article entitled "Some Saloon Arguments," and the first three arguments were late cases where men had been murdered for opposing the saloons. The next two arguments were cases of murderous assaults, and the other four were threats of violence, or actual assaults. "We will fill," says a certain judge, "the Brazos River with dead Prohibitionists."

IV. FOURTH EFFECT, — LOSS OF THE PROMISED LAND. Bring into the lesson a summary of the rest of the chapter.

V. NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT ON OLD TESTAMENT THEMES, especially the reference to this lesson in Heb. 3 and 4. Unbelief keeps us out of heaven (Heb. 4: 1; Mark 16: 16). On those who will not believe (John 3: 36). The warning in Heb. 3: 12.

LESSON XII. — SEPTEMBER 16.

THE SMITTEN ROCK. — NUM. 20: 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ.* — 1 COR. 10: 4.

TIME. — March-April, B.C. 1452. Thirty-seven and a half years after the last lesson; and the beginning of the 40th year of the Exodus (comp. 1: 1; 20: 1, 22, and 33: 38).

PLACE. — Kadesh Barnea in the wilderness of Zin, on the southern border of Canaan.

MOSES' REVIEW. — Deut. 3: 23-28.

A SIMILAR INCIDENT, at Horeb. — Ex. 17: 1-7; Ps. 105: 41; 106: 32, 33; 107: 1-9.

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. — 1 Cor. 10: 1-13.

PRONUNCIATIONS. — Ka'dësh; Mër'ibāh; Mir'īām; Pōme/-grănătes (pum'); Zin.

INTERVENING HISTORY. — There were nearly 38 years between the event which formed the subject of the last lesson, and that which we are now to consider. Those years are almost a blank; the sacred writer has touched them but lightly; for the nation was under the ban of God, the covenant was in abeyance, and a new people, from the rising generation, were being trained for the conquest of the promised land. We conjecture that during most of the time the Israelites were dispersed in detachments through the wilderness for the purpose of procuring subsistence for themselves and their animals; and the emphatic statement of ver. 1 that the "whole congregation" assembled at its close, favors the inference (1) that these years must have been marked by singular fatalities, as the whole generation of adults that came out of Egypt perished.

(2) That the period was one of great declension or even of apostasy is probable from Ezek. 20: 15 ff; Amos 5: 25 ff; Hosea 9: 10. The most that we know of it is contained in Num. 15: 1 to 19: 22; and Deut. 1: 46. — *Johnson.*

(3) These were also years of training in character, in obedience, in knowledge of God, in fitness to conquer and inherit the land (Deut. 8: 2, 3; 32: 10-12).

(4) The leading events recorded are the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, followed by the utter destruction of themselves and their leading followers (Num. 16: 1-35), and the miraculous budding of Aaron's rod (Num. 17: 1-11).

INTRODUCTION.

The immediate occasion of the miracle which forms the subject of our study is stated in vers. 2-6. At first there seems to have been sufficient water for all (ver. 1); but the dry season approached, and the springs failed. Crowded together in a narrow space, after having been accustomed to the larger scope of the wide wilderness, there was sharp suffering. God thus tried the new generation. It was better than that which preceded it; but it had learned from its fathers to murmur and rebel where it should have prayed. — *Johnson.* It is well to compare this incident with the one which occurred 39 years before near Sinai (Ex. 17: 1-7).

1. Then ¹came the children of Israel, *even* the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and ²Miriam died there, and was buried there.

¹ Num. 33: 36. ² Ex. 15: 20. Num. 26: 59.

EXPLANATORY.

1. The Dry and Thirsty Land. — Vers. 1-5. 1. Then: after an interval of nearly 38 years, during which Kadesh was probably their central nucleus or rendezvous. They would naturally change their locality from time to time, like the Bedouins of all ages, but still cherishing the hope of eventually becoming possessors of the land of promise. Meantime they are not to be conceived as dwelling, in their intervals of repose, in a compact camp, which the nature of the country forbade to such an immense multitude, amounting to over 2,000,000, but as expatiating in bands, here and there, over the adjacent country, still having the tabernacle as the centre and the rendezvous to which they would return. — *Bush.* Some of these wanderings are given in Num. 33: 19-36, extending as far south as Ezion Geber on the eastern arm of the Red Sea (1 Kings 9: 26). **Came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation.** However they had hitherto become separated into roaming or straggling detachments, yet now they all came in one solid, compact mass into the desert of Zin, and the station of Kadesh. — *Bush.* **Into the desert of Zin.** The place of encampment was no doubt adjacent to the spring of Kadesh. On the former occasion they probably encamped on the more level ground of the wilderness of Paran to the west; but now, for some reason unknown to us, on the hills of the wilderness of Zin to the east. — *Cook.* **In the first month:** Abib, or Nisan, including parts of our March and April. It was the first month of the 40th year since the Exodus, as appears from Num. 33: 38, compared with ver. 28 of this chapter, and Deut. 2: 1. This, therefore, was the last year of Israel's sojourn in the wilderness, and during the course of it Miriam, Aaron, and

2. ¹And there was no water for the congregation: ²and they gathered^a themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.

3. And the people ³chode^b with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died ⁴when our brethren died before the LORD!

4. And ⁵why have ye brought up the congregation^c of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?

5. And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it *is* no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither *is* there any water to drink.

6. And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle^d of the congregation, and ⁶they fell upon their faces: and ⁷the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.

7. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Rev. Ver.: *a.* assembled; *b.* strove; *c.* assembly; *d.* tent of meeting.

¹ Ex. 17: 1.

² Num. 16: 19, 42.

³ Ex. 17: 2. Num. 14: 2.

⁴ Num. 11: 1, 33; 14: 37; 16: 32, 35; 49.

⁶ Ex. 17: 3.

⁶ Num. 14: 5;

16: 4, 22, 45.

⁷ Num. 14: 10.

Moses all died. — *Bush.* And the people abode in Kadesh. The time of their stay in this place it appears, from comparing chap. 33: 38, was about four months, as on the first day of the fifth month Aaron died at Mount Hor, whither they had previously removed. — *Bush.* And Miriam: Moses' older sister, who it is supposed watched the infant Moses by the Nile. As she must have been 11 or 12 years old at that time, and Moses was now 119 years old (for he died aged 120, eleven months after), Miriam must have been about 130 years old at her death.

2. And there was no water for the congregation. There were large, natural springs at Kadesh, but (1) the supply was insufficient for so great a multitude; (2) the supply may have failed from some temporary drought, as is frequently the case in the desert; (3) the people were somewhat scattered, and it would be difficult for all to reach the limited supply. And they gathered themselves against Moses: rebelling against his authority, and complaining of the way in which he had led them.

SEEMING GROUNDS FOR COMPLAINT. 1. They were actually suffering now as they assembled for a new start; while scattered over a large territory they had been able to supply their thirst. 2. It was Moses who had brought them into this difficulty.

THE UNREASONABLENESS OF THE COMPLAINT. 1. Moses was acting under the guidance of a wise and good God. It was God's doings rather than Moses'. 2. Their complaints and rebellion showed that they needed the discipline. 3. They should have prayed instead of grumbling. 4. They should have remembered all the wonderful deliverances of the past. 5. No great good comes to men without some incidental evils, which are both the fruit of our imperfections, and necessary on account of them.

3. And the people chode with Moses: strove, with bitter, reproachful words. Died when our brethren died: referring to those who died in the rebellion of Korah by earthquake and fire (16: 32-35); and perhaps to other cases where the rebellious were slain. But more likely to the whole number of adult men who gradually perished because of their unbelief and rebellion at the time the spies were sent into Canaan.

4. Into this wilderness: "a land of deserts and of pits; a land of droughts and of the shadow of death; a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt" (Jer. 2: 6).

5. Come up out of Egypt. The contrast with what they had heard, or in some cases have even remembered, of Egypt was very great. But in all such cases the tendency is to emphasize the good of the past and forget its evils, and at the same time to magnify the evils of the present and forget its good.

II. The Prayer. — Ver. 6. And Moses and Aaron went, etc. Instead of turning upon the people in a recriminating tone, and denouncing divine judgments against them, they have immediate recourse to the appointed meeting-place, where the Lord was to be sought, and there humbly prostrate themselves before his face. The people sinned; but Moses and Aaron prayed. — *Bush.* Fell upon their faces: the outward expression of their inward feelings. The natural attitudes aid the spirit of prayer.

PRAYER IN THE TIME OF TROUBLE. The Bible is full of examples and of invitations to take our troubles to God. The cause was God's. The people were in this trouble in obe-

8. ¹Take the rod, and gather^e thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and^g it shall give forth his water, and ²thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts^h drink.

9. And Moses took the rod ³from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

10. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregationⁱ together before the rock, and he said unto them, ⁴Hear now, ye rebels; must^k we fetch you water out of this rock?

11. And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and ⁵the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts^h also.

Rev. Ver.: e. assemble the congregation; g. that it give forth; h. cattle; i. assembly; k. shall we bring.

¹ Ex. 17: 5.

² Neh. 9: 15.

Ps. 78: 15, 16; 105: 41; 114: 8.

Isa. 43: 20; 48: 21.

³ Num. 17: 10.

⁴ Ps. 106: 33.

⁵ Ex. 17: 6.

Deut. 8: 15.

1 Cor. 10: 4.

dience to God's leading. God was the only one who could give help. He had often given it before. God's wonderful goodness and glory is shown in his being the hearer and answerer of prayer. **The glory of the Lord appeared:** flashing in brilliance from the cloud. A token that God heard. A manifestation to the people that he was on the side of Moses and would defend him.

III. Water from the Rock.—Vers. 7-11. 8. **Take the rod:** that with which the miracles in Egypt had been wrought (Ex. 7: 8 sqq.; 19 sqq.; 8: 5 sqq., etc.), and which had been used on a similar occasion at Rephidim (Ex. 17: 5 sqq.). This rod, as the memorial of so many divine interpositions, was naturally laid up in the tabernacle, and is accordingly (ver. 9) described now as taken by Moses "from before the Lord."—*Cook*. **Speak ye unto the rock before their eyes.** There still exists at Kadesh a large single mass or small hill of solid rock. It is the only visible naked rock in the whole district, and from it still flows an abundant stream.—*Trumbull's Kadesh Barnea*. Moses was to *speak*, not to *smite*. He spoke to the people instead of to the rock, as commanded. If he had only governed his tongue, he would have saved himself great trouble. **And thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock.** Here was the answer to Moses' prayer. God was marvellously good to the thirsty people in spite of their sinful complainings; better than Moses thought he ought to be.

10. **Hear now, ye rebels.** These words mark the first sin of the brothers. They were to address the cliff and not the people. Moreover, the servant of God must not indulge in fretful anger and impotent scolding. He had waited thirty-eight years for a new generation to arise. The promise of God (Num. 14: 13) had led him to expect in the children a better people than the fathers had been. But here, at their first assembly to march upon Palestine, they seemed to possess all the rebelliousness of those who had perished for their sins. It was a bitter disappointment. Moreover, Moses and Aaron had been slandered and abused, and their authority was set at naught; and their anger had, hence, the element of personal resentment.—*Johnson*. **Must we fetch you water out of this rock** (Rev. Ver., *shall we*)? Not probably with the emphasis on *we* (for the pronoun is not in the Hebrew), as if Moses and Aaron proposed with arrogant assumption to work the miracle themselves, but either (1) an expression of impatience, as if they hated to do such a thing for so ill-deserving a people, or (2) an expression of doubt, as Bishop Hall paraphrases it, "Is it likely that we shall fetch water out of this hard rock to satisfy your thirst? This we are required to do; but is this a thing possible to be done?"

11. **He smote the rock twice:** when he was commanded to speak only. This act expressed either (1) unbelief, as if the word alone would not be sufficient, or (2) "the blows were evidences of the petty personal anger of Moses and Aaron, an anger far removed from the divine indignation against wrong which becomes the saint, and which partakes the calmness, even as it does the sternness, of that God from whom it proceeds." **And the water came out abundantly.** God's mercies are not always repressed by the infirmities of his saints. The waters of mercy, in revivals of religion, may sometimes, though they do not usually, flow when the professors and ministers of religion are unfaithful.—*Johnson*. God would not ~~destroy~~ the people, or deprive them of needed blessings, because the leaders sinned.

12. And the LORD spake¹ unto Moses and Aaron, Because¹ ye believed me not, to² sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation^m into the land which I have given them.

13. ³Thisⁿ is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.

Rev. Ver.: *l.* said; *m.* assembly; *n.* these are the waters. ¹ Num. 27: 14. Deut. 1: 37; 3: 26; 32: 51. ² Lev. 10: 3. Ezek. 36: 23. ³ 1 Pet. 3: 15. ⁴ Deut. 33: 8. Ps. 95: 8; 106: 32.

IV. The Sin and Punishment of Moses.—Vers. 12, 13. 12. Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me. That is, ye have not believed in me with that practical faith which would have led you to sanctify, or, in other words, to honor and glorify me in the eyes of this people.—*Bush.*

THE SIN OF MOSES was therefore (1) a want of faith, which was the root of all his other failures on this occasion. (2) From want of faith came irritation and anger, an ebullition of passion unworthy of God's choicest leader, and which thus dishonored God whose representative he was. (3) These feelings of Moses misrepresented the loving-kindness and tender mercies of God toward his people who err in the time of their distress. "If thou shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" (4) There may have been a public doubt of God, not perhaps of his power to bring water from the rock, but of God's willingness to do it. (5) It was a sin of the tongue (Ps. 106: 33) and of act. (6) It was an outburst of his old hot blood of youth, when he smote the Egyptian.

NOTE. The sin was greater because it was the sin of an almost perfect man, who had lived in communion with God. But the provocation also was very great. We read in Ps. 106: 33 that the Israelites "provoked (literally, *made to rebel*) his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips." Therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. The punishment was heavy; but the sins of those who stand in high positions are more conspicuous and misleading than the sins of others, and hence they deserve more conspicuous and severe rebuke. The punishment would tend to exhibit the sacredness of Jehovah, which his ministers had concealed; and submission to it was the only means which they possessed of making amends for their grievous fault. Other reasons for the severity probably concurred. It is probable, also, that Moses and Aaron had served their people as long as their peculiar gifts allowed: there was to be a new era, and there must be a new man; the conquest of Palestine made it necessary that some one gifted, like Joshua, with pre-eminent genius for military affairs, should be elevated to the supreme command.—*Johnson.* Moses was 119 years old, and his age, rather than the need of more military genius, rendered a new man necessary.

13. This is the water of Meribah: *i.e.*, strife; called Meribah of Kadesh in Deut. 32: 51, to distinguish it from the Meribah of Sinai (Ex. 17: 2, 7). Because the children of Israel strove. The name did not arise from the sin of Moses and Aaron, but from that of the people. And he (the Lord) was sanctified in them: the Lord was shown to be holy, opposed to all sin, in all places and in all degrees, by this signal punishment of his most beloved servant.

V. New Testament Light.—In 1 Cor. 10: 4, it is said: "And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." This verse refers either to the smitten rock of Ex. 17, thirty-nine years before, or to this occasion. The same truth applies to both. The rock is called *spiritual*, both because the water from it was miraculous, given by the power of the Spirit of God, and because the literal rock was also a figure of the nourishing and strengthening of their spirits, which was the result of their experience.

How did the Rock follow them? (1) Some think that the smitten rock rolled after the Israelites; and others, that the waters from the rock followed them. But (2) the rock that followed them was Christ. The Logos, the manifested Jehovah, who attended the Israelites in their journey, was the Son of God who assumed our nature, and was the Christ. It was he who supplied their wants. He was to them the fountain of living waters. He was the *spiritual* Rock of which they drank.—*Dr. Hodge.*

THE DRY AND THIRSTY LAND OF THE SOUL. This world can never satisfy the longings and thirsts of the soul. Every person comes at times into the consciousness of these thirsts, and that all worldly things are but "vanity and vexation of spirit," so far as satisfying them is concerned. Men thirst (1) for forgiveness; (2) for a new life and heart; (3) for a worthy object and aim of life; (4) with a noble ambition, a longing for more; (5) for knowledge;

(6) for happiness; (7) for power; (8) for the communion of saints, for sympathy and love; (9) for eternal life and heaven.

CHRIST THE ROCK, *whence flow the living waters*. Jesus satisfies every longing of the soul. The waters that flow from his cross are living, fresh, vivifying, abundant. As many-sided as is man's nature, so many-sided is the religion of Christ.

OTHER PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Every life is varied. It has times of trial, of discouragement, of suffering.
2. When these times come we should not murmur, but go to that God who has helped us many times in the past.
3. Discouraged people magnify the evils of the present and the blessings of the past. If the Israelites could have gone back to Egypt as they desired, they would have complained more bitterly than they did at this time.
4. We are often helped by unexpected people, in unexpected places. I know there is a rock immediately ahead of me; but God can melt it into a river. — *Joseph Parker*.
5. Prayer is the true refuge in the hour of trouble. But they can best use prayer in trouble who have frequent communion with God in daily life.
6. There are imperfections in the best of saints.
7. The Bible does not hesitate to record them. For if all the ancient saints were represented as perfect, modern saints would have little hope.
8. The imperfections of good men dishonor God and his cause.
9. Therefore good men are severely punished for their faults. The punishment being largely that they are not permitted to accomplish what they would for the kingdom of God.
10. The source of wrong words, of anger, and impatience, is unbelief.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Wm. Taylor's *Moses*, p. 358 ff.; Hamilton's *Moses*, p. 312; *Sermons* by Phillips Brooks, 2: 320; Spurgeon's *Sermons*, 2: 312; Edersheim's *The Exodus and Wanderings*. On the Golden Text, see Hodge's *Commentary* on 1 Cor. 10: 4. On imperfect instruments, see Mrs. Gatty's *Parables from Nature*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Have the class read the corresponding Scriptures. Note the two Meribahs, and the two rocks whence living waters flowed. Mark the place, the time, and the intervening history.

SUBJECT,—CHRIST, THE SOURCE OF THE LIVING WATER.

I. THE DRY AND THIRSTY LAND (vers. 1-5). So the world cannot supply the thirsts of the soul.

Illustration. No wants are so keen, none so imperiously demand supply, as those of hunger and thirst. When long continued, nothing is more distressing: hence the figure is often used to denote any intense desire for anything. Few persons in America ever know what thirst means. But in Oriental lands one need not look alone at caravans crossing the desert for illustrations, when their water-supply has given out, when they are tantalized by an appearance of trees and water ahead, and push on with quickened, though feeble, sore, and convulsive march, knowing that they must drink or die; and then perhaps faint with exhaustion and disappointment at finding that they have for hours been painfully chasing a mirage. On many a waterless day's journey, the effects of heat and thirst make a man as ravenous as a wild beast when he approaches water. He plunges and snaps after it with involuntary, unreasoning, purely physical movements, and drinks and drinks, till he is as sick and distressed with fulness and torments therefrom as he was just before tortured with thirst." — *Prof. I. H. Hall*.

Illustration. Seeking satisfaction in this world is like trying to quench the thirst by drinking the salt waters of the sea. The more we drink, the thirstier we are.

Illustration. There is a Russian story of one who entered a diamond mine in search of great riches. He filled his pockets with great gems, and then threw them away to make room for larger ones. At length he became very thirsty, but there was no water there. He heard the flow of rivers, but they were rivers of gems; and he hastened forward at the sound of a waterfall, but it was a cascade of jewels. He was very rich in precious stones, but he was dying of thirst, and his riches were worse than useless.

Illustrations. *Solomon* tried all that the world can give, and under the most favorable circumstances, yet found all to be vanity and vexation of spirit. *Byron*, with rank and wealth, and all manner of pleasure, failed of content and happiness. *Alexander* conquered the world, but it did not satisfy his soul; and, if he could have conquered all the worlds that stud the heavens, he would still have wept for more. For God has not created a single human soul so small and poor that all the material universe can fill it. All literature is full of expressions of the failure of worldly things to satisfy the soul.

II. WATER FROM THE ROCK (vers. 6-11). Make the story as vivid as possible. NOTE how good God was to supply the wants of those who were so unworthy.

III. THE SIN OF MOSES (vers. 12, 13). See in the lesson the indications of Moses' sin, expressed more definitely in Ps. 106: 33. NOTE the great provocation he had. NOTE how he sinned in his strongest point (Num. 12: 3), as did Peter and Elijah, and learn a lesson from this fact. Probably Moses' feelings were like those of Jonah when God was merciful to the repenting Ninevites (Jonah 4: 1-11). NOTE the severity of the punishment, and the reasons for it.

Illustration. God's great instrument for saving the Israelites and establishing his kingdom was imperfect. So God ever uses imperfect instruments, but yet accomplishes his work. See the story "Imperfect Instruments," in Mrs. Gatty's *Parables from Nature*, where God's use of imperfect human instruments is illustrated by the necessary imperfection in tuning an organ.

Illustration. The sins of good men are but eddies contrary to the great tide of their lives. They are a little imperfect fruit on a tree full of good fruit.

IV. NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT ON OLD TESTAMENT THEMES. 1 Cor. 10: 4 refers to this smitten rock. Christ is that spiritual Rock whence the living waters flow. Christ satisfies all the thirsts of the soul. Christ follows us all our journey through (see John 7: 37-39). Unbelief keeping us from the promised land (Heb. 3: 18, 19). Light on the reasons for this severity toward Moses is shed by Heb. 12: 6; Luke 12: 48.

LESSON XIII.—SEPTEMBER 23.

DEATH AND BURIAL OF MOSES.—DEUT. 34: 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*—PROV. 4: 18.

TIME.—Moses died during the first week of the 12th month of the 40th year of the Exodus, *i.e.*, the latter part of February, B.C. 1451. The calculation is thus made: The first Passover in the promised land was kept on the 14th day of the first month of the 41st year of the Exodus (Josh. 5: 10). Four days before, they crossed Jordan (Josh. 4: 19). Previous to this they spent three days in preparations (Josh. 1: 11; 3: 1-3). This brings us to the seventh day of the first month. But before this they mourned 30 days for Moses. Thus the death of Moses must be put not later than the seventh day of the 12th month of the previous year, or the 40th year since the Exodus.

PLACE.—Moses died on Mount Pisgah, the highest peak of Nebo, the chief mountain of the range of Abarim, the mountains of Moab. It is northeast of the head of the Dead Sea, where it receives the river Jordan.

The Israelites were now encamped in the broad space between the river Jordan and the mountains of Moab, about opposite Jericho, on the eastern bank of the river. This tract has a breadth of four or five miles. The space occupied by the Israelitish camp consisted, in the main, of a large and luxurious oasis upon this bank, slightly raised above the barren flat.—*Rev. E. T. Espin.*

MOSES was 120 years old.

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY was probably written for the most part by Moses. The series of addresses, of which it chiefly consists, was delivered during the last few weeks of his life; for he began these addresses on the first day of the 11th month of the 40th year of the wanderings (Deut. 1: 3), and died before the seventh day of the 12th month.

Deuteronomy means the *second law*, the *repetition of the law*. It consists of three discourses, to which are added three appendices, in the shape of the song of Moses, the bless-

ings pronounced by him on the tribes, and the narrative of his death, which last is to-day's lesson, and must have been added by another hand.

PRONUNCIATIONS.—Am'rām; Bēth-Pē'ōr; Gīl'ēād (G hard); Jōch'ēbēd; Mānās'-sēh; Mō'āb; Nāph'tāli; Nē'bō; Nūn; Phā'raoh (fā'rō); Pis'gah; Zippō'rāh (or Zip'pōrāh); Zō'ār.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—(See Num., chaps. 16-33). In our last lesson we left the Israelites at Kadesh in the spring of B.C. 1452, thirty-nine years after the Exodus, preparing for their final journey into the promised land. They decided not to take the shortest route directly north, but to go down around the southern end of the Dead Sea, up its eastern shores and enter the land near Jericho, its richest and least defensible portion. But the Edomites were in the way. Moses asked permission to pass through their country, but the favor was denied. He therefore led the people southward along the Arabah or depression with rocky mountains on either side, and reaching from the Dead Sea to the eastern branch of the Red Sea. On the way, at Mt. Hor, Aaron died, at the age of 122 or more. On this southern journey the people murmured again, and were punished by fiery serpents. They continued their journey to the Red Sea, then turned and went northward, east of the Arabah, and of the Dead Sea, and conquered the Amorites who held by conquest the territory of Moab along the Jordan. Thus the Israelites held possession of the country east of the Jordan from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. Then they encamped in the plains of Moab, east of the Jordan opposite to Jericho, overlooking the promised land. While here, Balaam from the mountains overlooking their encampment, uttered his prophecies. Here Moses gave the addresses, and sang the noble psalm recorded in Deuteronomy. From this place Moses ascended the mountains of Nebo to die.

1. And Moses went up from the plains of Moab ¹unto the mountain^a of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that *is* over against Jericho: and the LORD² shewed him all the land of Gilead ³unto Dan,

Rev. Ver.: a. Mount Nebo. ¹ Num. 27: 12; 33: 47. Deut. 32: 49. ² Deut. 3: 27. ³ Gen. 14: 14.

EXPLANATORY.

I. A Brief Review of Moses' Life. 1. Moses (*drawn out* from the water) was born B.C. 1571, in Egypt, near Zoan on the eastern branch of the Nile. His father's name was Amram, his mother's Jochebed, both of the tribe of Levi. He had an older sister Miriam, and an older brother Aaron. The story of his being hidden in an ark of bulrushes, saved by Pharaoh's daughter and adopted by her, is familiar to all. He was trained for a few years by his mother in the religion of his fathers, and then was taken to the court of Pharaoh, and taught "all the learning of the Egyptians," and became "mighty in words and deeds." This continued till he was forty years old. 2. Then began the second period of Moses' life. He made his great choice to give up his rank and hopes among the Egyptians, and to cast in his lot with his own people, and lead them out from their hard bondage. His first efforts were wrong in kind and premature in time. He was compelled to leave Egypt, and in the wilderness of Arabia spent another forty years,—years of communion with God, years of preparation for his great work. Here he married Zipporah. 3. When Moses was eighty years old the third period of his life began. God appeared to him in the burning bush on Horeb, and appointed him the leader and deliverer of his people. The fruits of his eighty years of preparation now appear, and for forty years more he accomplishes his life's work in saving his people from Egypt, organizing them into a nation, and bringing them to their promised land.

II. The Vision of the Promised Land.—Vers. 1-4. The time had come for Moses to end his earthly career. On account of his failure at the waters of Meribah in Kadesh, as we saw in our last lesson, he could not enter the land of promise; but God mingled love with justice, and showed Moses that the punishment was a necessity, but God's heart overflowed with loving-kindness and tender mercies toward his child and prophet.

1. And Moses went up from the plains of Moab: where the Israelites were encamped. (See *Place*). Moab was the eldest son of Lot; and hence the Moabites were kinsmen of the Israelites. **Unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top (or summit) of Pisgah.** The general name of the range was Abarim (Deut. 32: 49), which seen from Palestine presents the appearance of a cliff or wall. A high mountain of this range was called Nebo, from a heathen idol, and one peak or summit of Nebo was named Pisgah, *the*

2. And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, ¹unto the utmost^b sea,

3. And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, ²the city of palm trees, unto Zoar.

4. And the LORD said unto him, ³This *is* the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: ⁴I have caused thee to see *it* with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

5. ⁵So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

6. And he buried him in ^ca valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but ⁶no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

Rev. Ver.: *b*. hinder; *c*. in the. ¹ Deut. 11: 24. ² Judg. 1: 16; 3: 13. ³ 2 Chron. 28: 15. ⁴ Gen. 12: 7; 13: 15; 15: 18; 26: 3; 28: 13. ⁵ Deut. 3: 27; 32: 52. ⁶ Deut. 32: 50. Josh. 1: 1, 2. ⁶ See Jude 9.

height. That is **over against Jericho**: locating thus the mountain. **And the Lord showed him** (caused him to see) **all the land of Gilead**. No miracle was necessary, and yet, perhaps, "the eye that was not dim" was enabled to see farther than human eye ever saw from such a height before. — *Ellicott*. The difficulty in regard to the possibility of seeing so far has been exaggerated. An Oriental atmosphere, as compared with our own, has a transparency which is marvellous. — *Hackett*. **Gilead**. The mountainous region east of the Jordan, extending some sixty miles from the Dead Sea to the Lake of Galilee, bounded on the east by the Arabian plateau and having an average breadth of about twenty miles. — *Johnson*. **Unto Dan**. Some unknown city in the north of Gilead. Or it may refer to the city of Dan at the sources of the Jordan at the foot of Mt. Hermon; for Hermon was seen from Pisgah by Tristram.

2. **And all Naphtali**: the territory afterwards given to the tribe of Naphtali, and situated in the extreme north of Palestine, west of the Sea of Galilee. **The land of Ephraim, and Manasseh**. Two great districts lying side by side in the very heart of Palestine, extending from the Jordan to the Mediterranean. — *Johnson*. **Unto the utmost sea**: the Mediterranean, about fifty miles distant.

3. **And the south**. The South country, Negeb, the southern portion of Palestine, extending almost to Kadesh. **And the plain of the valley of Jericho**: north of the Dead Sea around the mouth of the Jordan. **Unto Zoar**: in the southeastern part of the plain.

4. **This is the land**, etc. See Gen. 12: 7 and 13: 5.

VISIONS OF HEAVEN. God gives us Pisgah views of the promised land to which we are travelling through this wilderness world. 1. We have them in the Scriptures, where glimpses of heaven are given to us, both by description, and by the ideals of a holy life set before us. But one must have something of the character of Moses before he can see the vision in its true glory. 2. God gives his children heavenly experiences, earnest and foretastes of the blessedness to come. But these, too, come after faithful service and devoted living.

THE OBJECT of these visions is (1) to present before us the true ideal of life. It is not a vain thing to think often of a perfect and holy heaven, for it shows us how we ought to live on earth. (2) To be a motive and inspiration to higher living. (3) To be a comfort in hours of darkness and discouragement. As the vision Moses saw showed to him that his life had been a success, that he had accomplished his work, and the ends he had sought were certain to be accomplished, so heaven is the assurance of our life's success.

III. The Death and Burial of Moses. — Vers. 5-8. 5. **So Moses . . . died there . . . according to the word of the Lord**. Or, as the word literally is, *by the mouth of the Lord*; and we do not wonder that the Jewish rabbis understand it to mean *by the kiss of the Lord*. As the father kisses his boy when he lifts him to his knee, so death came to Moses as a token of his Lord's affection. — *Wm. M. Taylor*.

6. **And he (God) buried him in a valley (or ravine) in the land of Moab** (on the mountain Nebo), **over against Beth-peor** (*house, or temple, of Peor*, a Moabite idol), a town somewhere on the same mountain. "Moses is alone in this honor. The Son of God was buried by sinful men. Moses was buried by Jehovah." — *Ellicott*. **But no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day**: because, as more than probable, his resurrection took place at the same time, and Moses received then that glorious body in which he

7. ¹And Moses *was* a hundred and twenty years old when he died: ²his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

8. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab ³thirty days: so the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moses were ended.

9. And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the ⁴spirit of wisdom; for ⁵Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the children of Israel hearkened unto him. and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

¹ Deut. 31: 2.² Gen. 27: 1; 48: 10. Josh. 14: 10, 11.³ Gen. 50: 3, 10.

Num. 20: 29.

⁴ Isa. 11: 2.

Dan. 6: 3.

⁵ Num. 27: 18, 23.

appeared with Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. — *P.* I have always believed that the contention between Michael and the devil about the body of Moses (Jude 9) was, in fact, *a struggle for his body* — that Moses was to be raised from the dead, and that Satan resisted his resurrection. *When the contest took place we cannot say. — Ellicott.*

WHY MOSES' GRAVE WAS UNKNOWN. 1. To preserve it from idolatrous or superstitious worship. 2. Because it may be that God did not intend to leave his body to corruption, but to transform it into a spiritual body, like Elijah's, and like Christ's at his ascension.

"And had he not high honor?
The hillside for his pall,
To lie in state, while angels wait
With stars for tapers tall;
And the dark rock pines, like tossing plumes,
Over his bier to wave;
And God's own hand, in that lonely land,
To lay him in the grave." — *Cecil Frances Alexander.*

7. His eye was not dim, etc.: he did not die of old age and the decay of his natural powers, but his time was come, and God took him to himself.

8. Wept for Moses . . . thirty days: seven days was the usual period of mourning; but for persons of high rank or official eminence, it was extended to thirty (Gen. 50: 3-10; Num. 20: 29). — *J., F. and B.* The sorrow of the bereaved was expressed not only by loud wailing, but by beating the breast, by sad-colored garments, and by songs of lamentation. — *Johnson.*

LESSONS FROM THE DEATH OF MOSES.

1. Untimely death may be the result of special sin.
2. We are reminded of the loneliness of dying. No one can pass within the veil with us.
3. Take note of God's goodness to his dying servant. "At evening time it shall be light."
4. Fail not to note God's goodness to his bereaved people. He had prepared some one to carry on the master's unfinished work.

IV. *Moses' Successor.* — Ver. 9. And Joshua the son of Nun: see the first lesson of the next quarter. *Was full of the spirit of wisdom.* The original word rendered *wisdom*, as employed in the Old Testament, means neither mere shrewdness nor mere piety, but that union of both which makes a man successful in practical affairs, under the blessing of God, whose laws he obeys. — *Johnson.* *For Moses had laid his hands upon him:* see Num. 27: 18-23. This was not a meaningless ceremony, but an action performed in accordance with a special communication from God, who, in concurrence with the symbol, imparted to Joshua such peculiar gifts as he needed, in addition to his rare natural endowments. The laying on of hands was a significant ceremony in which the Hebrews were accustomed to pray for the gift or the transference of a spiritual quality. — *Johnson.* *And the children of Israel hearkened unto him:* they accepted Joshua as their divinely appointed leader, in place of Moses.

REASONS FOR THE CHANGE OF LEADERS. Even God's punishments of his people are mercies. Moses had done the work for which he was fitted. The task of fighting and conquering and settling a new country required different talents from his. And, besides this, our dreams are never realized. Canaan was not what Moses had dreamed of, or even what it seemed to him from the top of Nebo; nor were the Israelites going to be what he hoped and prayed. Had he lived to cross the Jordan, to undergo the perils and toils of war, to find that he could not control the fierce young people who belonged to a different generation and a different age from his, to see them sparing the foes whom he had taught them to exterminate, to see them led away into the idolatries which he had charged them to abolish, — in short, had he lived to lose his hold upon the people, to find himself thrown aside as a

10. And there ¹arose^d not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, ²whom the LORD knew face to face,

11. In all ³the signs and the wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land,

12. And in all that ^emighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed^g in the sight of all Israel.

Rev. Ver.: *d.* hath not arisen; *e.* the; *g.* wrought. ¹ Deut. 18: 15, 18. ² Ex. 33: 11. Num. 12: 6, 8.
³ Deut. 4: 34; 7: 19.

relic of a former age, and to find the difference between the Canaan of his dreams and the Canaan of reality, — the old man's heart would have broken. Better that he should pass away now, with the powers of life unabated, the visions of his lifelong dream undissipated, and a nation weeping at his departure. — *John E. Todd.* Examples like this are of frequent occurrence in history.

V. **The Characteristics of Moses.** — Vers. 10-12. These verses, as also probably the whole chapter, must have been added by some later inspired writer, to the Book of Deuteronomy as Moses left it. These verses are Moses' epitaph, a sublime eulogy, literally true.

I. MOSES WAS A GREAT PROPHET. 10. **And there arose not a prophet . . . like unto Moses.** No other was like him, till we come to Jesus, the prophet whom God had promised should be raised up like unto Moses (Deut. 18: 18), the organizer of a new kingdom, speaking the truth directly from God. **Whom the Lord knew face to face.** God revealed himself and his will directly to Moses without the intervention of any angel, or dream, or medium whatsoever. A prophet is one who speaks and acts under the direction of God, the medium through which God reveals his will to men. Moses was the greatest of the prophets, because (1) none had such perfect and direct communion with God; (2) none spoke God's word so fully and originally; (3) none worked such mighty miracles; (4) none had so marked an influence upon the kingdom of God.

II. MOSES WAS A GREAT STATESMAN, a wonderful organizer, the source of more good and wise laws than any other person, the maker of a new era in government, possessing marvellous control over men; grounding his government on great principles of righteousness, but with great fertility of adaptation and resource, and full of the most unselfish patriotism. If it is said that all he did had its source in God, yet only through a great man could such things have been revealed.

III. MOSES WAS A GREAT GENERAL, both in carrying on war, and in seeking to avoid it when possible. He never suffered a defeat.

IV. MOSES WAS A GREAT WRITER, — a historian, a biographer, a poet.

V. MOSES WAS GREAT IN CHARACTER. He was a most consecrated man. He walked with God. He was a man of prayer. He had great faith. He was meek under opposition and insult. He was unselfish. He gained his character by overcoming strong temper and tendencies which more than once broke out into active wrong. Two-thirds of his life was spent in preparation for life's great work. The long silences in his life were essential to the times of activity.

"As times of quiet and unbroken peace,
 Though for a nation times of blessedness,
 Give back faint echoes from the historian's pen."

MOSES A TYPE OF CHRIST (Deut. 18: 15, 18; Acts 3: 22). 1. He gave up a royal home to save his people. 2. He delivered them from bondage. 3. He spoke the words of God. 4. He was a mediator between God and man. 5. He founded a kingdom. 6. He was the guide and leader. 7. He died before he saw the results of his work. 8. He was full of disinterested love, seeking not his own, but the good of the people.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

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on *Infidelity* (264-276), is an account of previsions of the future at death. Mrs. Alexander's poem on *The Burial of Moses*; James Montgomery's *Death of Moses*. See Graetz, Vol. I., pp. 57, 58, for an estimate of the character of Moses.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Beginning with the sad event of our last lesson, give a bird's-eye view of the year's journey of the Israelites from Kadesh to the plain of the Jordan opposite Jericho. Trace the journey on the map. Note the time and place of Moses' death.

SUBJECT, — THE CLOSING HOURS OF A NOBLE LIFE.

I. A GLANCE AT MOSES' LIFE. A summary is given in the *Notes*.

II. A VISION OF THE PROMISED LAND (vers. 1-4). Moses, in his vision, saw the success of his life, the accomplishment of his hopes, the assurance of the future, the crown of his labors. God gives us such visions of our individual life completed and crowned in heaven, of our existence as a race triumphant in the millennial days. We have foretastes and foregleams that assure us of heaven and the kingdom of God.

Illustration. One of our best artists has painted a picture called *Echoes*. In a boat slowly floating down the river lies a dying soldier surrounded by his friends, while some one is playing "Home, sweet home" on the bugle, and the company listen to the echoes of the song from the neighboring cliffs. The soldier seems to be hearing the far-off echoes of the sweet home to which he is going.

Illustration. The grapes of Eshcol which the spies brought from Canaan as a specimen of its fruits, are a type of those heavenly experiences God sends to us sometimes as earnest of the joys of heaven.

III. THE CLOSING SCENES (vers. 5-9). The blessedness of such a death. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Let us fall asleep "in the everlasting arms."

Illustration. The peculiar beauties and glories of the setting sun, a fit ending for a day of mingled cloud and sunshine and storm. There is a charm about the closing day beyond that of the noontide glory.

Illustration. There is a legend of the death of Moses, that on the mountain he met three men (who were really angels) digging a grave. Moses offered to help them, and to see if it were right, he lay down in it. Then the majesty of God appeared above his head. And the Lord said to Moses, "Close thine eyelids," and he obeyed. Then the Lord God addressed the spirit of Moses, and said: "Holy soul, my daughter, for 120 years hast thou inhabited this undefiled body of dust. But now thine hour is come, go forth and mount to paradise." But the soul answered, trembling and with pain: "In this pure and undefiled body have I spent so many years that I love it, and I have not the courage to desert it." "My daughter," replied God, "come forth! I will place thee in the highest heaven beneath the cherubim and seraphim who bear up my eternal throne." Yet the soul doubted and quaked. Then God bent over the face of Moses and kissed him. And the soul leaped up in joy, and went with the kiss of God to paradise. — *Weil's Legends*, in *Geikie's Hours with the Bible*

Although Moses is dead his work goes on.

Illustration. When Jabez Bunting, one of the greatest of Wesley's disciples, died, a minister of the Methodist denomination, in preaching his funeral sermon, closed a glowing peroration by saying, "When Bunting died, the sun of Methodism set." A plain man in the audience immediately shouted, "Glory be to God! that is a lie!" — *William M. Taylor*.

Illustration. John and Charles Wesley are buried in Westminster Abbey, and on their monument is this inscription: "God buries the worker, but carries on the work."

What preparation we must make to die such a death!

IV. LESSONS FROM MOSES' CHARACTER (vers. 10-12). Reviewing the chief characteristics of Moses as given in the notes. It is well to

NOTICE, 1st, the wonderful progress of a man's life, the change from the babe in the ark of bulrushes to the great prophet, statesman, general, and poet. What a marvel of development! what a hint of the possibilities of our future!

NOTICE, 2d, the sources of his greatness, the steps upward. Every step in goodness was a victory, an overcoming, with failures and scars enough to show us the fierceness of the battle. Moses was strong in God. His victory was the victory of faith. Moses took the same path we must tread if we would be God's true children.

V. NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT ON OLD TESTAMENT THEMES. The promise of a deliverer like Moses (Deut. 18: 15, 18; Acts 7: 37, 38). In what respects Moses was a type of Christ. Moses' reappearance nearly 1500 years after this, on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17: 3, 4; Mark 9: 4, 5). Jude's reference to Moses' death (Jude 9). Moses' greatest act (Heb. 11: 24-26).

LESSON XIV. — SEPTEMBER 30.

REVIEW AND TEMPERANCE LESSON.

REVIEW.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.* — DEUT. 8: 2.

TIME. — From May, B.C. 1491, to March, B.C. 1451, nearly forty years.

PLACE. — Arabia, the mountains of Sinai, the wilderness of the Sinaitic peninsula, centring around Kadesh Barnea, southerly to the eastern arm of the Red Sea, thence northerly beyond the Dead Sea to the valley of Jordan near its mouth.

PERSONS. — Moses is the leading character; then come Aaron, Miriam, Joshua, Caleb.

EVENTS. — The leading event is the 40 years' wandering and discipline in the wilderness, including the entering into covenant with God; the golden calf; Moses 40 days in the Mount; the ceremonial law; the building of the tabernacle; the destruction of Nadab and Abihu; the sending of the spies; the sin of Moses at Meribah, and the miracle of water from the rock; the fiery serpents; the prophecy of Balaam; the conquest of Canaan east of the Jordan; the death of Aaron on Mt. Hor, and of Moses on Mt. Nebo.

THE BIBLE. — At the beginning of the quarter the divine Revelation could have contained only Genesis, and the first 20 chapters of Exodus. At the close the Israelite Bible consisted of the Pentateuch, — the first five Books of our Bible.

SUBJECT, — THE ANCIENT PILGRIM'S PROGRESS,

from the bondage of Egypt to the promised land, — from the state of worldliness to heaven.

1. The Exodus symbolizes conversion.
2. Moses was a type of Christ.
3. The pillar of cloud and fire, the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God (Lessons III., IX.).
4. The manna, the daily spiritual food.
5. Assenting to the book of the covenant, consecration to God and a public profession of religion (Lesson I.).
6. Generous giving for the tabernacle, a revival of religion and of gifts to missions, to the building of churches, and God's work on earth (Lesson IV.).
7. The tabernacle, the church and its religious worship (Lesson V.).
8. The sacrifices and feasts, the institutions of religion, and great religious meetings (Lessons VI., VII., VIII.).
9. Falling into idolatry (Lesson II.), the unbelief of the people (Lesson XI.), the sin of Moses (Lesson XII.), the failings and imperfections of God's people.
10. Water from the rock, the living waters from Christ and his Word (Lesson XII.).
11. The forty years in the wilderness, the long and varied experiences of the Christian — joys and sorrows, trials, difficulties, victories, helps — disciplining him for his heavenly home.
12. Reports from the promised land (Lesson X.), and visions of its blessedness (Lesson XIII.), the higher experiences of the Christian, and the promises and descriptions of heaven.
13. The end of the journey of life (Lesson XIII.).

APPLICATION TO TEMPERANCE. The bondage of intemperance. The great opposition of companions, and of those who sell, to any deliverance from this bondage. The plagues which come upon those who enslave others. The great decision (crossing the Red Sea by the help of God). The covenant of the Pledge. The law of God commanding temperance. The helps toward living a temperate life. The aid of the church, the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, the institutions of religion. Occasional falls and failures, but followed by a new start in life. Growth in strength and courage by the long discipline. Final triumph.

TEMPERANCE LESSON.—THE MAGICIAN'S PALACE.

SCRIPTURE LESSON.—DEUT. 21: 18-21.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.*—PROV. 4: 14.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—These words occur in the second of the three addresses which Moses, just before he died, gave to the children of Israel.

18. If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and *that*, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them:

19. Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place;

20. And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son *is* stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; *he is* a glutton, and a drunkard.

21. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Bad Boy.—Ver. 18. If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son. The son who will not obey his parents cannot make a good citizen. A large part of the crimes committed have their source in disobedience to parents.

II. Efforts to save the Boy.—Vers. 18-20. FIRST, by parental discipline. He that does not use every effort to reclaim his wayward child is responsible for his ruin. Love, kindness, training, rewards, chastisements, beginning early in life, are means of reformation.

SECOND EFFORT. Obtaining the aid of the officers of the law.

19. Bring him . . . unto the elders of his city: the older and wiser men, the appointed judges. And unto the gate of his place. At the gates was the public square, and the place of trial, because here was the centre of concourse.

20. He will not obey: and the natural result was as described in this verse. **Glutton:** given to appetite for food. **Drunkard:** yielding to the power of strong drink. In both cases the sensual masters the spirit, the reason, the conscience. Disobedience is a natural road to drunkenness.

III. The Punishment of the Incurable.—Ver. 21. He was put to death in the usual mode in which the Jews inflicted capital punishment.

FIRST REASON. So shalt thou put evil away from among you. The person deserved the punishment. He was of no use in the world. He was the source of evil to others by his influence and example. To let the wicked go unpunished is the height of cruelty and wrong.

Illustration. A wild beast that cannot be tamed, but is destroying people, must be itself destroyed. It is no mercy, but cruelty, to keep it alive.

Illustration. One who has an infectious disease must be kept apart from all to whom he can communicate the disease. To let him go among others is cruel and ruinous.

SECOND REASON. And all Israel shall hear, and fear. They will take warning by his sad end, and be afraid to walk in the way which leads to such ruin. This is one object of all punishment.

ILLUSTRATION.—THE MAGICIAN'S PALACE.

Homer, in his great poem, *The Odyssey*, describes the journeyings and adventures of the wisest of the Greeks at the siege of Troy, named Ulysses (Odysseus), king of Ithaca in Greece. After the destruction of Troy, Ulysses, starting for home, wanders about the world, meeting with many wonderful adventures. Among them is the one which will illustrate to us to-day a lesson of Bible temperance.

After escaping from hurricanes, and giants, and sirens, Ulysses and his companions found themselves anchored in the quiet harbor of a beautiful island as charming, to appearance, as the Happy Valley or the gardens of the golden age.

In the centre of this valley was a magnificent palace of snow-white marble in a grove of trees, with green lawns and flower-bordered paths leading up to it. The blue smoke went curling up from the chimneys, giving promise of welcome and banquets.

A number of Ulysses' followers went up to this palace, entered the door, and found a beautiful reception-room, with pictures and mirrors; they heard the voices of maidens chanting sweet songs, and the odors of a delicious banquet were wafted in upon their senses.

While they were waiting, a most beautiful lady, named *Circe*, an enchantress, came into the room and welcomed them with words sweeter than honey. She invited them into the banqueting room, placed each one on a throne of gold blazing with jewels, and ordered the feast to be brought in. They ate of her dainty meats, and drank freely of her spiced wines. They were sensual men and gormandized like swine. Suddenly the enchantress waved her wand over them, and they were transformed into hogs, and driven from their thrones, out into the back yard, and placed among the other swine, and fed on swine's food.

Only one had refused, resisting the temptation. He hastened back to the ships and told Ulysses the sad story. He immediately armed himself and started for the palace. On the way he was warned, as had been the others before him, by the sad singing and fluttering of a bird, who had been one of the enchantress' victims. Then a messenger from heaven came, and warned him of his danger, and plucking a flower with a black root, but snow-white blossom of most exquisite fragrance, gave it to Ulysses. So long as Ulysses kept this flower by him, and breathed in its sweet odors, he was safe. Thus armed, he went to the palace where the enchantress plied her arts and exerted her charms in vain. Ulysses compelled her to restore his men to their natural forms.

THE INTERPRETATION.

I. CIRCE'S PALACE, OR THE ATTRACTIONS OF STRONG DRINK. Strong Drink is an enchantress of marvellous power. Every sensuous attraction is used to draw men under her power, and make of innocent children and youth such rebellious and drunken persons as are described in the verses at the head of this lesson.

The attractions of taste, and pleasure, and music.

The attractions of beautiful rooms, cheerful and light.

The attractions of the cheering, exhilarating effects of the first draughts.

The attractions of appetite. Of jovial company.

The attractions of fashion and honor.

The attractions of all the lower senses.

II. WARNINGS.

From those who know the danger.

From conscience.

From religion and the Bible.

From the experience of friends and companions.

From men of science.

From our knowledge of the power of habit.

The Bible is full of warnings against all such temptations, pointing out the danger.

III. THE EFFECTS OF YIELDING. Strong Drink is an enchantress which changes men into beasts. It promises them thrones and kingdoms, and gives them in the end the lowest and basest place. It leads them to ruin and to death.

Illustration. Mr. Edward Carswell, in a lecture, spoke of a magician who offered to change any bright boy into an idiot. A mother consented to have him try his power on her son. The boy went forward; the magician made his passes; soon the bright look fades away from the boy's face, a vacant stare takes its place, and the boy becomes an idiotic fool. At length the mother asks the magician to change him back again. But to her astonishment, this he could not do. He could turn bright boys into idiots, but had no power to change idiots into bright boys.

IV. THE WAY OF SAFETY. The only safety is in total abstinence from all that can intoxicate, sustained by a faith in Jesus Christ which gives the soul the victory over the body, and places reason and conscience on the throne of life.

FOURTH QUARTER.

From October 7 to December 30, 1888.

Studies in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth.

LESSON I. — OCTOBER 7.

THE COMMISSION OF JOSHUA. — JOSH. I : 1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.* — EPH. 6 : 14.

TIME.—About the first of April, B.C. 1451; the seventh day of the first month, Abib (or Nisan), of the 41st year of the Exodus. For this command was given to Joshua three days before the crossing of the Jordan (Josh. I : 11); and four days after the crossing (Josh. 4 : 19) was the 14th, when the Passover was held (Josh. 5 : 10).

PLACE.—The *Israelites were encamped* on the plains of Moab, in the valley of the Jordan near its mouth, on the eastern side of the river, nearly opposite Jericho and between the river and Mount Pisgah.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.—1. *The name* is derived from its chief hero.

2. *The author.* According to Jewish tradition, it was written by Joshua himself, perhaps completed by one of the elders who outlived Joshua. It seems certain that at least the materials were collected and furnished by Joshua himself.

3. *The date of authorship.* Not far from B.C. 1424, the date of Joshua's death.

4. *Time.* The events of the Book extend over some 25 or 30 years.

INTRODUCTION.

In our last regular lesson we came to the death of Moses, the great leader and statesman who had brought the Israelites out of Egypt, organized them into a nation with laws, rulers, religious institutions, a priesthood, and an army; and had led them through the wilderness to the borders of their future home. He himself, by the command of God, had appointed Joshua to be his successor, and it is his career and character we are now to study.

1. Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' ¹ minister, saying,

¹ Ex. 24 : 13. Deut. 1 : 38.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The New Leader.—Ver. 1. Now after the death of Moses, as described in the last chapter of Deuteronomy. **The servant of the Lord.** A high and honorable title, carrying with it a reference to the peculiar nature of the service in which Moses was employed; viz., that of a minister, mediator, deputy or vicegerent of God, the honored organ through whom he communicated his will to his chosen people and managed all their varied interests.—*Bush.* **The Lord:** Jehovah, as always when printed in capitals in our version.

Sepulchre
of Joshua



Tim
a Rock



Samson carrying away the Gate
of the City



Jericho.



Hebron.



Gaza.



2. ¹ Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Israel.

¹ Deut. 34: 5.

Spake unto Joshua. From Deut. 31: 14 it seems highly probable that God's words on this occasion were delivered from the tabernacle. — *Bush.* **Moses' minister**, *i.e.*, his official attendant (his aide-de-camp, his prime minister), who, from being constantly employed in important services, and early initiated into the principles of the government, would be well trained for undertaking the leadership of Israel. — *F., F. and B.* **Joshua.** 1. *His name.* His name was originally *Oshea*, or *Hosea*, "help," "salvation," and was afterwards changed by Moses to *Jehoshua*, *i.e.*, the help or salvation of Jehovah. Modified by its passing through the Greek, it took the form of *Jesus*. "The great Captain of the Israelites and the Captain of our salvation had the same name, *Jehovah's help, or Saviour.*" 2. *His ancestry.* He was a descendant of Joseph, of the tribe of Ephraim. 3. *Place of birth.* There is every reason to suppose that Joshua was born in the land of Goshen, Egypt. His father was probably one of Pharaoh's slaves. — *Thornley Smith.* 4. *The date of his birth.* About 1534 B.C. The year of Joshua's birth is uncertain; but, if we suppose, with Jewish chronologers, that he lived in Canaan 27 years, we must infer that at the time of the Exodus he was 43; for he lived 40 years in the wilderness, and at his death he was 110 years old. Now, according to the Hebrew chronology, the year of the Exodus was 1491 B.C., and 43 added to 1491 is 1534, whence it follows that this was the year of Joshua's nativity. At the time of the Exodus, Moses was 80 years of age, so that Joshua was 37 years younger than he. — *Thornley Smith.* 5. *His earlier life.* Joshua grew up to manhood while Moses was an exile in the wilderness of Sinai. His first appearance was as a commander of the Israelite forces in a battle with the Amalekites soon after the Exodus (Ex. 17: 8-16). He then became an attendant or aide-de-camp to Moses. He was one of the spies. Near the close of the life of Moses, he was solemnly invested with authority over the people (Num. 27: 18; Deut. 31: 14, 23). In his 84th year, in obedience to the divine commission which our lesson rehearses, he assumed command of the people, and began a career of conquest which for both the difficulties and splendid successes which attended it, stands almost without a parallel. He died at the age of 110 years, after a life of stainless piety and brilliant achievements. 6. *His character.* Joshua was distinguished (1) for courage. He was a simple, straightforward, undaunted soldier. (2) As a general he was distinguished by a faculty of keen observation concerning the plans and forces of his foes. (3) He was distinguished also for the celerity of his movements (Josh. 20: 7-10). (4) He was a skilful strategist (Josh. 8: 2-9; 10: 9). (5) We mark as specially prominent, a simple-hearted trust in God. (6) Another characteristic was his superiority to temptation. (7) His humility was conspicuous. (8) Notwithstanding these excellences, he was not faultless. He once forgot to ask God for wisdom; and his forgetfulness led to keen humiliation (Josh. 9: 14-27). He also leaned too much to leniency, forgetting that leniency to criminals is always cruelty to the innocent (Judg. 2: 1-5). — *Franklin Johnson.*

II. The Work to be done by him. — Vers. 2-4. 2. **Now therefore arise:** spend no more time in grief, hesitate no longer from want of confidence to take the place of the great leader; God calls you, take up your work. **Go over this Jordan:** which lay within sight and rolled its waters between them and the land of promise.

THE JORDAN. (a) *Its name,* the Descender, from the rapidity of its flow. (b) *Its sources* are in the Lebanon Mountains which are "alive with bursting fountains and gushing streams." (c) *Its size.* Its length from its source to the Dead Sea is about 136 miles in a straight line. But its windings make the course of the river much longer. The stream flows 200 miles in making the 66 miles from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. "The river," says Whitney, "varies in width from 80 to 150 feet, and in depth from 5 to 12 feet. At its mouth it is 180 feet wide and 3 feet deep" in its ordinary flow. (d) *Its characteristics.* The Jordan flows through two lakes, Merom and Galilee, and falls into the Dead Sea. Its highest source, the head of the Hasbâny, is 1700 feet above the Mediterranean, and it falls over 1300 feet in reaching Lake Merom, which is 373 feet above the sea. "Between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, a distance of 66 miles, the channel is a chasm called the Ghor, from 1 to 12 miles broad; through which the river runs in a tortuous course, descending 606 feet to the Dead Sea. — *Geikie.* The descent from its highest source is 3000 feet. According to Mr. MacGregor (*Rob Roy on the Jordan*, p. 282), it has a fall of 15 feet per mile, and

3. ¹Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

4. ²From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.⁴

Rev. Ver.: *α*. border. ¹ Deut. 11: 24. Josh. 14: 9. ² Gen. 15: 18. Ex. 23: 31. Num. 34: 3-12.

if we subtract the Lake of Gennesareth and the lake and attendant marshes of Huleh, of 30 feet. Between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, however, the average fall is much less. It may be interesting to compare with this the average inclination of some of our own English rivers. The swiftest is the Dee, in Aberdeenshire, which has a fall of 16.5 feet per mile. The Tweed and Clyde have a fall of 16 feet and 14 feet respectively, while the Severn has but 26½ inches, the Thames 18 inches, per mile. — *Pulpit Com.* **Thou, and all this people:** numbering, according to the last census, 601,730 from 20 years old and upwards (see Num. 26: 51), or over 2,000,000 in all. At this time the Jordan was swollen with the spring floods (Josh. 3: 15), and was a deep and rapid stream. There were no boats, the ford was impassable, and there was no human means by which two millions of people could be taken across the river. A miracle so stupendous that friends and enemies alike would see in it the hand of God was necessary in order that Joshua might obey this command. This was but a type of many other difficulties to be encountered, and would test and strengthen their faith that they could conquer every enemy, in the strength of God, and in obedience to his commands.

3. **Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon.** That is, every place within the limits specified in the ensuing verse. The expression also intimates the condition upon which the land was to be given to the Israelites: their feet must tread it as conquerors. — *Keil.* **As I said unto Moses:** Deut. 11: 24, where the promise is given almost word for word.

EXTENT OF THE PROMISED LAND. 4. **From the wilderness:** the Desert of Arabia, where the Israelites wandered so long. This was the *southern* boundary. **And this Lebanon:** called "this" because visible from the region where the Israelites were encamped. Lebanon signifies *white mountain*, from its snow-clad summits. This was the *northern* boundary. **Unto the great river, the river Euphrates:** their *eastern* boundary. **All the land of the Hittites:** descendants of Heth, the second son of Canaan (Gen. 10: 15). It has lately been discovered that the Hittites were once a great and powerful nation, holding control of the region just described. **Unto the great sea:** the Mediterranean, the *western* boundary of the Israelites. **Shall be your coast:** or borders. All this was promised to the Israelites, and during the reigns of David and Solomon was held by them. They did not hold it all the time because they would not fulfil the conditions required.

BLESSINGS OF THE PROMISED LAND. The territory was ample and lay in the very centre of the then civilized world. — *T. Smith.* The records of Rameses II. show the condition of Palestine and the adjacent countries in the age of Moses itself. The Egyptian king brought back from them, he tells us, gold, glass, gums, cattle, slaves, ivory, ebony, boats, horses, chariots inlaid with gold and silver, or painted, iron, steel, dates, oil, wine, asses, cedar, suits of armor, fragrant wood, war galleys, incense, gold dishes with handles, ornaments of lapis lazuli, silver dishes, precious stones, honey, lead, spears of brass, colors, — the plunder, in fact, of a rich and civilized country. The meadows of Palestine, its fortresses, its groves, and its orchards are mentioned, showing that prosperity of every kind abounded. — "Lepsius" in *Geikie*. Such a land was worth every effort to gain.

DIFFICULTIES TO BE ENCOUNTERED. There were formidable leagues of chiefs and kings, organized armies, with giants among them, war horses and iron chariots, strong stone fortresses, in a country possessed by those who knew every foot of it.

TYPES AND APPLICATIONS. 1. *Our promised land* is (*a*) heaven, not merely a beautiful place, but a place of holiness, of knowledge, of service, of blessed companionship, of fullness of every good. But (*b*) we have a promised land in this world in the heavenly experience of the rest, the plenty, the victory which God gives his people in Christ Jesus who wholly trust in him. 2. *It is a good land.* It is very large and broad. It includes every good for the body and mind and spirit. It is a land of plenty; there are no limits to its joys, its blessedness, its usefulness, its knowledge, its experiences. The riches of Christ are unsearchable. 3. There are many *difficulties in the way*, for it can be obtained only by victory over all sin, over our selfish hearts, our evil habits and tendencies, over "the world, the flesh, and the devil."

5. ¹There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life : ²as I was with Moses, so ³I will be with thee : ⁴I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6. ⁵Be strong and of a good courage : for unto^b this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

7. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that^c thou mayest observe to do according to all the law,⁶ which Moses my servant commanded thee : ⁷turn not from it *to* the right hand or *to* the left, that thou mayest prosper^d whithersoever thou goest.

Rev. Ver. : *b*. for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land ; *c*. to observe ; *d*. have good success. ¹ Deut. 7 : 24. ² Ex. 3 : 12. ³ Vers. 9, 17. Deut. 31 : 8, 23. Isa. 43 : 2, 5. ⁴ Deut. 31 : 6, 8. Heb. 13 : 5. ⁵ Deut. 31 : 7, 23. ⁶ Num. 27 : 23. Deut. 31 : 7. Josh. 11 : 15. ⁷ Deut. 5 : 32 ; 28 : 14.

III. Conditions of acquiring Possession. — Vers. 5-9. FIRST CONDITION, *Taking possession*. As we saw in ver. 3, the Israelites were to receive only so much of the promised land as they should tread upon. What they were unwilling to take the pains to conquer with God's help, they could not enjoy.

It is the same with God's promises to us, — heaven, holiness, usefulness, blessedness. Only so far as we take them into our experience, only so far as we conquer the sins and enemies in their way, can we hold them in possession. God promises knowledge, but only so far as we use the means of obtaining it can we possess it. Prosperity, the enjoyments of civilization, usefulness, goodness, the higher joys of the spirit, can be possessed only in the same way.

SECOND CONDITION, *God's presence with us*. 5. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee : as an enemy in battle, successfully. The promise made to the whole nation, in Deut. 11 : 25, is here made to Joshua as the leader of the nation. It was literally fulfilled ; for not once in the lifetime of Joshua did the Israelites suffer a permanent defeat. Thus is it still : God's people, marching under the banner of their Captain, are called to fight, but they are not defeated. — *Johnson*. As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. Joshua had the experience of Moses' whole lifetime as an encouragement to his faith. Moses had many a trying time, many a hard duty, many a danger and difficulty ; and the God who had brought him safely and successfully through would not fail nor forsake the new leader. In every new difficulty before Joshua, — and they were many and great, — he could look back upon a greater one from which God had delivered Moses. But all his strength, as is all ours, was in God. The work was impossible to him without God's presence. With God he could do all things.

THIRD CONDITION, *Courage*. 6. Be strong and of a good courage : be strong and firm, or vigorous. Michaelis remarks that the Hebrew verb *to be strong* denotes strength of hand and arm to lay hold of and retain anything ; while *to be firm* denotes rather firmness in the knees, and ability to maintain one's position against the attack of foes. The expression occurs with increasing emphasis four times in this chapter. — *Rev. Dr. Steele*. The age needs strong and decided Christian characters, such as will not sink into indolence, and such as cannot be shaken by the suggestions of doubt. — *Johnson*. Shalt thou divide for an inheritance. That is, you shall conquer the country, and be able to distribute it among the tribes. It was an *inheritance*, because it came to them from God.

Courage — not so much physical courage as moral courage — is greatly needed in our day to stand by what is right at all costs ; to conquer besetting sins ; to resist the tides of fashionable wrong ; to carry on God's work and uphold God's truth. Such courage is founded on the assurance that we are on the side of God and of right ; on the consequent assurance of victory ; on consciousness of strength and fitness for the work ; on the experience of the past. Courage doubles the power of every effort, of every weapon ; inspires the body and the spirit with strength.

FOURTH CONDITION, *Obedience to God*. 7. Only be thou strong and very courageous. This is repeated again and again because it was of the utmost importance, and yet the difficulties in the way were so great that the people were in danger of faltering and yielding before them. That thou mayest observe to do according to all the law. It would require courage under many circumstances to keep the law perfectly amid the surrounding worldliness and idolatry. Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left. Perfect obedience

8. ¹This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth ; but ²thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein : for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9. ³Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage ; ⁴be not afraid,⁵ neither be thou dismayed : for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Rev. Ver.: *e.* affrighted. ¹ Deut. 17: 18, 19. ² Ps. 1: 2. ³ Deut. 31: 7, 8, 23. ⁴ Ps. 27: 1. Jer. 1: 8.

is represented by a straight line, and a course of sin by a crooked way. — *Steele*. **That thou mayest prosper.** For *prosper*, read *act wisely*, as the Hebrew word strictly means. — *Cook*. *Real prosperity and success* in the affairs of life are the result of a *wise, discreet, and prudent course of conduct*, and inseparable from it, and it is vain to look for it from any other source. Those only can reasonably expect the blessing of God upon their temporal affairs, who make his word their rule, and conscientiously walk by it in all circumstances; and this is the way of true wisdom. — *Bush*. The strongest temptation to deviate from the commands of God is presented by pleas of expediency and policy. God would teach Joshua that these pleas are always foolish, and that not only duty, but also wisdom, is manifested in a strict obedience to the divine law. — *Johnson*. Obedience to the law was not merely the wisest course in itself because God's way must be the wisest and best, but was the sign of loyalty to God, so that God would stand pledged to defend and give success to his own. Disobedience is not only the direct road to failure in itself, but the disobedient place themselves in such a relation to God that he cannot give them success.

FIFTH CONDITION, Study of God's Word. 8. **This book of the law:** The five Books of Moses. This Bible was their one religious authority. With this Bible Joshua was to do three things: (1) **Shall not depart out of thy mouth.** He must talk about it and teach it. He must make it the theme of his conversation. It must be a familiar book. All his teachings must be biblical. (2) **Thou shalt meditate therein day and night.** Even this busiest of men must study his Bible; let it be continually in his thoughts. No careless reading would do, but earnest, long-continued study. We must meditate on the Bible till we are imbued with its spirit, permeated through and through with it; for then only can we see the glory and power of each portion of truth. (3) **Observe to do according to all that is written therein.** All the study in the world is in vain without obedience. By obedience, we know the truth; by knowing the truth, we are aided to obey. The value of the study of the Word is to enable us to obey. (4) The results: **Then thou shalt make thy way prosperous.** Obedience to God, intelligent and conscientious, is the only way to true prosperity. — *P*. **Good success.** Not only in possessing the land and overcoming enemies, but in character, in happiness, in usefulness. Their national life would be a perfect success; they would grow to be a powerful nation; they would teach the world the truths of God; they would be a shining example all over the earth of the blessedness of serving the true God. Success comes to us in the same way. Only good success is something more than health, or wealth, or power, or pleasure. The highest success includes these; but the poorest man who has grown good, who is full of good works, who walks with God and tastes of his love, is far more successful than the richest and greatest without these things. — *P*.

9. **Have not I commanded thee?** I, whose authority is paramount; whose power is infinite; who am able to carry thee through all difficulties and dangers, and whom thou art bound implicitly to obey. So in the Christian warfare, it is the God of heaven whose battles we fight, and in whose service we are engaged. **For the Lord thy God is with thee.** Take hold of the promise, and KEEP that hold. Nothing so demoralizes the forces of the soul as fear. Nothing fosters fear like solitude. Only as we recognize the presence of the Lord, does fear give place to faith. Such simple, childlike faith in God has made more heroic souls upon this earth than the stoic could ever dream. — *Miss Sarah Smiley*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Commentaries on Joshua by Cook, Bush, Keil and Delitzsch, Ellicott, Wordsworth, Pool, Howard Crosby; *Pulpit Com.*; *Cambridge Bible for Schools*; *Geikie's Hours with the Bible*, Vol. II.; *Dean Milman's History of the Jews*; *Stanley's Jewish Church*; *Miss Sarah Smiley's Fullness of Blessing*; *Thornley Smith's Joshua and his Times*; *Principal Douglas's Handbook for Bible Classes*; *The Gospel in the Book of Joshua*.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Ver. 1. We win our way to higher stations by faithfully performing the duties of the lower. Joshua, the faithful prime minister of Moses, became his successor.
2. Ver. 2. The only work we can do well is the work to which God calls us.
3. The Christian's work would be impossible except for the help of God. But with the command to do is given the power to do.
4. Vers. 3, 4. The Christian's promised land is God's kingdom both in heaven and on earth, both for himself and for the world.
5. This land is very broad and large; it fills every want; it meets every desire; it occupies every faculty.
6. Only so much of the promise can be claimed as is taken into our hearts and lives.
7. Ver. 5. God's side shall always win in the end.
8. What God has done in the past for others is the promise and proof of what he will do for us.
9. Ver. 6. The inspiring power of courage.
10. Ver. 7. The law marks the way which God sees leads to success; and therefore obedience to that law is the true way to a successful life. There is no better way than God's.
11. The Bible which contains God's wise and perfect will should be our constant study. It is wiser for the traveller to throw away his guide books, and the sailor his charts, than for the Christian to neglect his Bible.
12. Ver. 9. "It takes God much longer to prepare us for a blessing than it does to give it when we are ready to receive it."

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The Book of Joshua. Connect this lesson with the last. Picture out the location of the Israelites and the circumstances in which they were.

SUBJECT, — THE CONDITIONS OF A SUCCESSFUL LIFE.

I. THE GREAT OBJECT TO BE OBTAINED (vers. 1-4). Joshua. The work he was to do. The extent of the promised land. Its riches and value (Num. 13:27; Deut. 1:25). Our promised land. Its extent. Its attractions. The fulness of the Christian life. What is a successful life? What we should aim to possess (Deut. 28:2-6). See New Test. Light.

II. THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY (ver. 3). We possess only what we conquer and use.

Illustrations. A man gives his son an education, but the son receives only so much as he acquires by study. We possess only so much of a book or a library as we make our own by reading and thought. A person may own thousands of books, and acquire possession of none of them.

Illustration. Every invention and discovery of our latest civilization — the power of electricity and steam, of printing, of chemistry, of light — were always given to man. They are part of the promised land of the race. But men receive only so much as they actually take possession of. Only what they conquer can they have, and we have but just begun to acquire our inheritance in this world. The same is true of God's spiritual blessings, of the Gospel, of missions, of a holy life, of heaven upon earth.

THE DIFFICULTIES in the way of the Israelites are stated in Num. 13:28-33; and some of those in our way in Eph. 6:12, 16; Jas. 1:2, 14, 15; Gal. 5:17-21. Bring out the hindrances to true success in life.

III. THE CONDITIONS OF TRUE SUCCESS (vers. 5-9).

Illustration. There is no such thing as "good luck" in the universe. As the old Chinese proverb puts it, "What will you have? says God. Pay for it, and take it." — *E. S. Atwood, in Mon. Club Ser.*

First. God's presence with us (ver 5). We on God's side, and then have all the wisdom and power of God on our side. The difficulties cannot be overcome without divine help. With God we can do all things.

Illustrations. Trust in the skill and power of the captain and pilot at sea. Trust in the knowledge and skill of the general of the army.

Second. Courage (vers. 6, 9). The repeated exhortation; the power of courage; the sources of courage; the difference between physical and moral courage, and the superiority of the latter.

Illustration. The great Admiral Nelson, as courageous an Englishman as ever lived, who attacked a polar bear with a handspike when he was a boy of fourteen, and told his captain, when he was scolded for it, that he did not know what fear was, had a slight form and a weak constitution, and could never have won a boat race. The highest courage which ever animated a human body would not enable the owner of it, if he himself were untrained, to stand for five minutes against a trained wrestler or boxer. . . . True manliness is as likely to be found in a weak as in a strong body. — *Thomas Hughes.*

Third. Obedience (ver. 7). God's law is the path which the highest wisdom in the universe has marked out as the way of success. Therefore he who disobeys goes necessarily away from success. Obedience is the proof of loyalty to God; places one on God's side, under God's protection.

Fourth. Study of God's Word. The rule of life. The chart on the voyage of life. Read all through. Study portions thoroughly.

IV. NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT ON OLD TESTAMENT THEMES. The propriety of using these histories as types and examples (1 Cor. 10: 11). Our promised land (Heb. 11: 13-16; Matt. 6: 33; John 1: 12; 3: 16; Rom. 8: 28; 1 Cor. 2: 9; 1 Tim. 4: 8). What keeps men from entering it (Heb. 3: 10, 11). A warning to us (Heb. 4: 1). The duty of studying God's Word (John 17: 17; Acts 17: 11; 2 Tim. 3: 15; 2 Pet. 1: 18, 19).

LESSON II. — OCTOBER 14.

CROSSING THE JORDAN. — JOSH. 3:5-17.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.* — Isa. 43: 2.

TIME. — B.C. 1451. Early in April. The crossing of the Jordan was on the 10th of Nisan.

PLACE. — On the east bank of the Jordan, opposite Jericho.

THEIR NUMBERS. — The warriors, men over 20 years old, numbered 601,730, so that the whole number of the people must have been over 2,000,000 (Num. 26: 51).

PRONUNCIATIONS. — Ad'ām; Am'ōrites; Cā'nānites (Kā'nānites); Gīr'gāshites; Hīt'tites; Hī'vites; Jēb'ūsites; Pēr'izzites; Zār'ētān.

CIRCUMSTANCES. — The time had now come for the Israelites to take possession of the land so long promised to them. Two tribes and a half had decided to take, as their portion, the rich pasture lands on the east of the Jordan, and this had been assigned to them, on condition that the warriors of these tribes should go over Jordan with their brethren to help them conquer the rest of the land. This they had agreed to do, and Joshua now called upon them to redeem their promise; and all prepared for decisive action.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **Preparations for crossing the Jordan.** — Ver. 5. **FIRST.** The fact that the crossing was to be made within three days was announced to the people through their officers, and they were commanded to prepare food enough to last through the movement (1: 10, 11).

SECOND. Joshua sent two men as spies across the river, to learn the condition of things among the enemy (2: 1). This verse may read "Joshua *had* sent," and then the spies were sent out before the announcement of the time of departure. Or they may have gone and returned within the three days. They must have crossed by swimming, and it would take strong and brave men to do this. On their return the spies reported that the Canaanites were utterly disheartened. In the words of one of the inhabitants of Jericho to them: "Your terror is fallen upon us, and all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (1: 9-11).

5. And Joshua said unto the people, ¹Sanctify yourselves: for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.

6. And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, ²Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

7. And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to ³magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

¹ Ex. 19: 10, 14, 15. Lev. 20: 7. Num. 11: 18. 1 Sam. 16: 5. ² Num. 4: 15. ³ Josh. 4: 14. 1 Chron. 29: 25. 2 Chron. 1: 1.

THIRD. A movement was made toward the river (3:1). The camp had been on the plateau in the valley, called Shittim, that is "the Acacias," from which they now move down to a lower level upon the very borders of the river, ready to pass over, if only a way could be made. But the barrier was as great as that of the Red Sea, 40 years before.

FOURTH. *Spiritual Preparation.* 5. And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves. The command now given was undoubtedly of the same import with that given by Moses, on the eve of the delivery of the law upon Mount Sinai (Ex. 19: 10-14). They were to wash their persons and their garments, and to abstain from everything that might indispose their minds to a serious and devout attention to the miracle about to be wrought in their behalf. A similar command was generally given on great and solemn occasions (Lev. 20: 7, 8; Num. 11: 18; 1 Sam. 16: 5; Joel 2: 16). — *Bush*. These were the outward signs of the sanctification, which really consisted at the same time in the spiritual purification, the turning of the heart to God in faith and trust in his promise, and in willing obedience to his commands, that they might rightly take to heart the wonder of grace which the Lord would the next day perform among them. — *Keil*.

SANCTIFICATION. To sanctify is to make holy, to set yourselves apart from common to sacred uses. Set yourselves apart to God, — yield yourselves to him, — put yourselves in that attitude in which he can with perfect readiness take you up. Draw nigh unto God, for he is drawing nigh unto you. — *Miss Smiley*. The special manifestation of God's presence should be awaited by his people in a posture of deep humiliation, and penitence, and prayer, and by diligent efforts to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit. — *Bush*.

1. This is the only appropriate way to approach a holy God who abhors all sin.
2. It honors God, as far as imperfect beings can honor him.
3. It sets forth the holy nature of God to others.
4. It fits us to see and understand God's words and marvellous deeds. "Without holiness no man can see God."
5. It fits us to make a right use of his special manifestations.

To-morrow: which would be the 10th of Nisan (4: 19), the anniversary of the day on which, 40 years before, the Israelites had chosen every man a lamb for their first Passover, their day of deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 12: 3). The Lord will do wonders among you. By this miracle (a) God inspired his people with faith and courage for their future work (ver. 10); (b) he put fear in the heart of their enemies; (c) he gave those enemies new proofs that he was the true God, and thus called on them to repent; (d) the miracle was necessary to make the entrance upon Canaan a true type of entering heaven, or of entering upon the new and higher life; (e) this miracle being done through Joshua, endorsed him before the people as their divinely appointed leader. — *P*.

II. Instructions about the Crossing. — Vers. 6-13. FIRST, Joshua instructs the priests. 6. Take up the ark of the covenant: the sacred chest containing the two tables of stone inscribed with the Ten Commandments (and the pot of manna and Aaron's rod (Heb. 9: 4)). The cover of the ark was a plate of pure gold, overshadowed by two cherubim, with their faces bent down and their wings meeting. This was the very throne of Jehovah, who was therefore said to "dwell between the cherubim." — *William Smith*. It was called the ark of the covenant, because these ten commandments were a covenant, or agreement, of God with his people, that if they would keep the law, he would be their God and Saviour. And pass over before the people. There was to be a space of 2,000 cubits, or nearly three-quarters of a mile, between the ark and the people, so that all could see the sacred symbol of the divine presence (3: 4). Had the multitudes crowded about it,

8. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water^a of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan.

9. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God.

10. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the ¹living God *is* among you, and *that* he will without fail ²drive out from before you the Canaanites,^b and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.

Rev. Ver.: a. waters; b. Canaanite (and so all these other nations are in the singular). ¹ Hos. 1: 10. Matt. 16: 16. ² Ps. 44: 2.

those at a little distance could not have kept it in sight. — *Johnson*. The separation also kept before the people the holiness of God.

MINISTERS AND TEACHERS MUST LEAD THE WAY. They are to be ever foremost in every good work. An officer cheers his men into action not from behind, but from the front. So the officer of God's army should be in the van of its progress. In zeal for his Master's cause, in unwearied efforts to promote it, in purity of life, in acts of love to the sick and aged, in public spirit, in honor, in truth, in self-command, in self-abnegation, the ordained servant of God should be in the fore-front of the grand army. But the army must follow its leaders. — *J. J. Lias*. **They took up:** that is, on the day following. The course of events is anticipated in order to give a finish to this portion of the narrative. — *Cook*.

SECOND, *God's instructions to Joshua*. 7. And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee: make thee great, put honor upon thee, as the leader and commander of the people. In this verse is given one reason for this miracle at the beginning of Joshua's career, that he might be revered and honored by the people as was Moses, at the beginning of whose career the Red Sea was crossed on dry ground. The miracle would be proof positive that Joshua was the leader appointed by God, to whom God would give the victory.

THIRD, *God's instructions to the priests*. 8. Here is the record of the command Joshua was to give the priests in private, which in ver. 13, he repeats in fuller form to the people, and the obedience to which is recorded in vers. 15 and 17. **Ye shall stand still in Jordan.** They were first required to pause on the brink of the stream, till the channel was laid dry, and then they seem to have advanced and taken their station in the midst of it, till all the people had passed over. As the entire bed of the river *below* the resting point of the ark would become dry by the waters running off towards the Dead Sea, the congregation might pass over in that direction having the ark on their right, and keeping at the prescribed distance of 2,000 cubits.

FOURTH, *Joshua's instructions to the people*. 9. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel. The people were addressed, not personally *en masse*, but representatively, as specified, ver. 2 and 1: 10, 16, through the heads and officers of their tribes. — *Steele*. The whole people were now informed as to the manner in which they were to cross the seemingly impassable barrier of the river.

10. Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you. This is the *second* reason given for the miracle. Joshua modestly says nothing about the other reason given in ver. 7. A *third* reason may be gathered from chap. 5: 1; viz., that the Canaanites might be taught to see in the exterminating Israelites the executioners of God's judgments against them. — *Cook*. **The living God**, is a God of life and power and energy, of wisdom and foresight. **That he will without fail drive out from before you.** He extends the force of the miracle beyond their entrance into the land, and properly so, since the mere opening of a way into a hostile country, from which there could be no retreat, would be nothing but exposure to death. Joshua, therefore, foretold that when God drove back the river it would be as if he had stretched out his hand to strike all the inhabitants of the land, and that the proof which he gave of his power in their crossing the Jordan would be a certain presage of victory to be gained over all the tribes. — *Keil*. They greatly needed this proof, for the difficulties of the Hebrews were immense. To the iron chariots, the horses, and the fortresses of the country, and its formidable leagues of chiefs and kings, they could oppose only a rude, half-armed militia, with inadequate military training. — *Geikie*. These tribes are mentioned to show the greatness of the work of subjugation, possible only through the divine power

11. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the ¹Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan.

12. Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out^c of every tribe a man.

13. And it shall come to pass, as^d soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, *that* the waters of Jordan shall be cut off *from^e* the waters that come down from above; and they ²shall stand upon^g a heap.

14. And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing^h the ³ark of the covenant beforeⁱ the people;

15. And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim^k of the water, (for ⁴Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)

Rev. Ver.: *c.* for; *d.* when the; *e.* even the; *g.* in one heap; *h.* that bear; *i.* being before; *k.* brink.

¹ Mic. 4: 13. Zech. 4: 14.

² Ps. 78: 13; 114: 3.

³ Acts 7: 45.

⁴ 1 Chron. 12: 15. Jer. 12: 5.

which could make a path through the swollen waters. The Canaanites were, strictly speaking, the *lowlanders*, who inhabited the lower tracts of Palestine, on the sea-coast and western bank of the Jordan (Num. 13: 29). But this term is often used in a wider sense, including all the tribes west of the Jordan and in Phœnicia deriving their descent from Canaan (Gen. 10: 15-18). In this sense the other tribes named were Canaanites. The Hittites were descended from Heth, the second son of Canaan, and settled in the time of Abraham in and round Hebron (Gen. 23: 19; 25: 9). They afterwards became a great nation, and spread over the regions north of Palestine. The Hivites, descendants of Canaan, were a commercial people. They were mainly located "under Hermon, in the land of Mizpeh" (Josh. 11: 3), in Mount Lebanon (Judg. 3: 3). The Perizzites: *rustics*, or *villagers*; Canaanites who dwelt in open unwallied towns, to the south and on the western flanks of Mount Carmel. The Gergashites were probably a family of the Hivites, dwelling east of the Sea of Galilee. The Amorites: *mountaineers*, descendants of the fourth son of Canaan, were the most powerful of the Canaanitish people. They occupied (Gen. 14: 7) the barren heights west of the Dead Sea, and stretched west to Hebron (Gen. 13: 18; 14: 13); thence, tempted probably by the high tablelands on the east, they crossed the Jordan, and occupied the country from the Arnon to the Jabbok (Num. 21: 13, 26). The Jebusites, a Canaanite tribe, were in possession of the central highlands around Jerusalem, their stronghold. They retained possession of this until David dislodged them (2 Sam. 5: 6-8).

11. Behold, the ark . . . of the Lord of all the earth: who, therefore, has the right and the power to give them the land. Passeth over before you: to lead you, to make the way for you, to prove that it is safe for you to follow, to show that the power and the victory are from God.

12. Now therefore take you twelve men: to bring memorial stones from the river bed, as described in our next lesson.

13. And it shall come to pass, etc.: here is an explanation of the manner of crossing, and a promise, the fulfilment of which is described in the following verses.

III. The Decisive Step: Jordan crossed. — Vers. 14-17. On the 10th of Nisan. 14. When the people removed from their tents: Broke up their encampment, taking their tents with them. The original expression means primarily to *pull up*, and it is used with reference to tent-pins, which are pulled up when a tent is to be moved. — *John-son*. The priests bearing the ark: two thousand cubits, three-fifths of a mile, from the people, who saw the river dry up from this distance.

15. And the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water. The priests were the special ministers of Jehovah, bearing the symbol of Jehovah's presence. It was, therefore, as if the water had stayed at the footsteps of Jehovah himself. — *Johnson*. For Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest: *i.e.*, the barley harvest, which is during the latter part of March and first of April in this warm and sheltered region. Dr. Thompson says that he has visited this place "early in April, and found the barley harvest around Jericho already ended." He also found the river full to the

16. That the waters which came down from above stood *and* rose up upon¹ a heap very^m far from the city Adam, that *is* beside ¹Zaretan; and those that cameⁿ down² toward the sea of the plain,^o *even*³ the salt sea, failed,^p *and* were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.

17. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, ⁴and all² the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people^r were passed clean over Jordan.

Rev. Ver.: *l.* in one heap; *m.* a great way off at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan; *n.* went; *o.* Arabah; *p.* were wholly cut off; *q.* all Israel; *r.* the nation. ¹ 1 Kings 4: 12. ² Deut. 3: 17. ³ Gen. 14: 3; Num. 34: 3. ⁴ Ex. 14: 29.

brim, and saw evidence in abundance that it had overflowed its banks quite recently. — *Land and Book*, new ed., I., 362, 363. There are two or three series of banks to the river. Nearest the usual banks at this place is a low, level beach about 20 rods wide, "which low flats are the banks that were flooded when the Israelites passed over." — *Thomson*. Canon Tristram (*Land of Israel*, p. 223), who describes his visit to the Jordan as occurring just after it had been overflowing its banks, states that, by measurement, the river was found to have been fourteen feet above the level at which he found it, and it was then quite full. Bartlett (*From Egypt to Palestine*, p. 451) remarks: "We were fortunate enough to see it in the state in which it is described in Joshua, 'overflowing all its banks,' — that is, the whole line of its banks. The turbid stream rushed along like a mill-race, and though it had fallen from its greatest height, the proper banks of the channel were invisible, and indicated only by lines of oleanders and other shrubs and trees." This was on the 22d of March. This overflowing is caused by the melting of the snows of Hermon. — *Pulpit Com.* The river at this place, according to Thomson, is about 100 feet wide, and the margin overflowed about 400 feet more, making about 500 feet in total width.

WHY THIS SEASON WAS CHOSEN FOR CROSSING. This season of high water was wisely chosen; for (1) the miracle was the more stupendous and impressive to the Israelites. (2) It inspired their enemies with greater terror. (3) Those enemies, had the crossing been attempted when the water was low, would have appeared upon the opposite shores to annoy the Israelites. Why, then, did they not dispute it upon the present occasion? The answer is simple. They trusted to the swollen river, which they knew no army could cross. (4) The crossing in harvest was also providentially ordered with reference to the food of the people; they entered the land when it yielded abundance (see Josh. 5: 11, 12). — *Johnson*.

16. That the waters. Connected with, "And it came to pass" in ver. 14. From above stood and rose up upon a heap: as if they were dammed up, and no waters flowed down, so that the channel soon ran dry. Very far from the city Adam: rather "far away, by Adam the city," that is beside Zaretan, or Zartanah (1 Kings 4: 12). The exact site is unknown. It is, however, probably connected (Robinson, Knob.) with the modern *Kurn Sartabeh* (Horn of Sartabeh), the name given to a lofty and isolated hill some seventeen miles on the river above Jericho. Here high rocks on either side contract the valley to its narrowest point, and seem almost to throw a barrier across it; and here, in all likelihood, "far away" from where Joshua and Israel were passing, were the waters held back and accumulated by the hand of God. They would need to be so but for a brief space. — *Cook*. And those (waters) that came down toward the sea of the plain (the Dead Sea) . . . failed: *i.e.*, they flowed rapidly off down the steeply sloping bed of the river, and the whole channel above and below, as far as the eye could reach, lay dry before the people. The whole multitude could therefore "haste (cf. 4: 10) and pass over" at once. — *Cook*. And the people passed over right against Jericho. It is probable that the people crossed the river at what was afterwards called Beth-abara, or *house of passage*, which seems to have derived its name from this very circumstance. It was here that John baptized (John 1: 28), and that Jesus, as well as Joshua, began to be magnified. — *Bush*.

17. And the priests that bare the ark . . . stood firm on dry ground: with good footing and without flinching from fear of the waters rushing upon them from above. This required no little faith. The priests were about three-fifths of a mile up stream above the people, and were thus seen by all; and their faith encouraged the people to venture into the bed of the river. And all the Israelites passed over on dry ground: probably at different points, over a wide space. They were now fairly standing upon the promised land, on the eve of conquest, and after that, of rest.

APPLICATION. The crossing of the Jordan was to be the great initiative of the conquest.

Such *crossing over* is unquestionably the great need of the majority of Christians; not to make some slight change, but to get upon *new ground*. The great lesson of Jordan is the power of Christ's resurrection to separate us not only from Egypt, but from all wilderness wanderings, and to secure for us an entrance into heavenly places. — *Miss Smiley*. It brings us into the possession of heavenly blessings before we go there. We are made conscious of heaven. We have still to fight before the time is come to rest. — *W. Kelly*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On the state of Jordan in the barley harvest, see *Land and Book*, new ed., I., 351, 362, 363; III., 675, 676; Tristram's *Land of Israel*, 227; and Bartlett's *From Egypt to Palestine*, 451; Thornley Smith's *Joshua and his Times*, chap. 4; Miss Sarah Smiley's *Fullness of Blessing*; Geikie's *Hours with the Bible*, 2; Stanley's *Jewish Church*, I, Lect. 10; Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, 298; Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*. See account of crossing the Danube in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, Milman's edition, Vol. III., p. 321; Arnold's *Sermons*, Vol. V., pp. 35-37.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. God sometimes lets great difficulties rise up in our paths in order to reveal his goodness and power to us in overcoming them.
2. God still does wonders for his people, in conversions, in the power of the cross, in the progress of the church, in the daily care of his people.
3. Ver. 5. We should especially sanctify ourselves in the near presence of God.
4. Ver. 6. God not only accompanies his people, he goes before them, to prepare the way.
5. Ver. 7. All God's wonders, his marvels of converting power, of holy lives, of triumph over temptation, trouble, and death, all these honor and magnify the church, for whom he does them.
6. Religion, its institutions and its ministers, should come to the front in times of danger or of work; when courage and faith are required.
7. Ver. 10. We know by what God has done for us, that he will continue to do; by the fulfilment of one promise that he will fulfil the others.
8. Ver. 11. Comfort and strength and courage are found in the fact that our God is God, not of a few people and of narrow space, but of all the earth.
9. Ver. 14. We cannot in general go wrong in keeping close to the ordinances of God, and thus, as it were, following the ark in all its removals. — *Scott*.
10. They must follow the priests as far as they carried the ark, but no farther. So we must follow our ministers only as they follow Christ. — *Henry*.
11. Vers. 15-17. The overflowing Jordan between the Israelites and their promised land was a type of the river of death that flows between us and heaven. God can help us to pass it safely.

"Could we but stand where Moses stood,
And view the prospect o'er,
Not Jordan's stream nor death's cold flood
Could fright us from the shore."

12. There is a Jordan before all good; before a new life, the higher life, usefulness, larger spheres.
13. Every one needs to take a decided stand, a positive step that cannot be retraced, and commit himself to the side of right and of God. A decided stand is often more than half a victory.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The time, the place, the circumstances.

SUBJECT, — A NEW START IN LIFE.

I. PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEW START (ver. 5). The several different acts of preparation given in the *Explanatory*. The sanctification was to be a spiritual preparation, not a mere form (Lev. 20: 7, 8; Deut. 26: 16; Isa. 56: 6, 7).

APPLICATIONS. (1) To preparation for our life's work; for the Christian life; for heaven. (2) The reports of the spies represent what Christians testify as to the Christian experience, both by word and by life. (3) We should sanctify ourselves; first by conversion, giving our hearts to Jesus (Ps. 51: 10; John 3: 3, 5). (4) There is no sudden leaping into great good-

ness, or great usefulness, without previous preparation. But most of us have spent time enough in preparations. It is time to take the decisive step.

Illustrations. 1. Preparations for a voyage are often long and careful, though the start may be sudden. 2. Lightning seems to flash suddenly from the clouds, but the electricity has been gathering for hours before.

II. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE NEW START (vers. 6-13). As given in *Explanatory*. The need of instruction, and of obeying it. God's wonderful works of revival and conversion magnify the church before the world, so as to lead men to come to Christ. Past wonders give hope and assurance for the trials and the work to come.

Illustration. When King David wished to prove that God would enable him to conquer Goliath of Gath, he told him how God had already enabled him to conquer a lion and a bear.

Illustration. "A man's strength does not stand in himself, but in leaning on God. The middle of the Atlantic is as safe as any other part when a storm is raging. And a child is as safe as a strong man, because if the ship does not go down, both are preserved; but if it does go down, they are both drowned. The difference in their strength is nothing when it is the Atlantic." — *H. W. Beecher*.

III. THE DECISIVE STEP (vers. 14-17). A word-picture of the scene of the crossing, — the wide and deep flood; the receding waters; the priests with the ark 2000 cubits up the stream, setting an example of faith. A marvellous display of the fact that their God was a living God, and the God of all the earth.

Illustration. *The Goths crossing the Danube.* When, in the fourth century of the Christian era, the Goths, amounting to nearly 1,000,000 persons of both sexes and of all ages, crossed the Danube, which had been swelled by incessant rains, a large fleet of vessels, of boats, and of canoes, was provided; yet many days and nights they passed and repassed with indefatigable toil, and, notwithstanding the most strenuous efforts of the officers, many were swept away and drowned by the rapid violence of the current. — *Thornley Smith*.

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. The decisive step of our lives, — conversion (John 3: 5). The Jordan crossed is the duty of repentance and consecrating ourselves to God (Luke 13: 3; Acts 2: 38; Rom. 12: 1).

Illustration. When Cortez landed upon the shores of America, with his army, for the conquest of Mexico, he burned his ships behind him. There was no retreat. They must conquer or die.

Death is like the river Jordan, separating us from the blessedness of the future life. See 2 Cor 5: 1, 8; Phil. 1: 23; Luke 23: 43.

Illustration. The scene in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, where Christian reaches the river of death, and is welcomed by the shining ones on the other side.

LESSON III. — OCTOBER 21.

THE STONES OF MEMORIAL. — JOSH. 4: 10-24.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Then shall ye let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.* — JOSH. 4: 22.

TIME. — April, B.C. 1451. The 10th of Nisan.

PLACE. — The fords of the Jordan opposite Jericho, and Gilgal (rolling). The site of this ancient place has lately been identified by the Palestine survey. The name Jiljulieh, which is the same word as Gilgal, still clings to a mound about three miles southeast from the spot where, apparently, the city of Jericho must have stood; near the beautiful fountain known as the Sultan's Spring, and close to the steep background of the limestone hills of Judah. (Josephus makes it "10 furlongs"; Stanley, "less than two miles.") The host of the Hebrews, at the camp thus chosen for them, were about 500 feet above the bed of the Jordan, and had the stream from the Wady el Kelt close on the south. The river they had crossed lay underneath them about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the east. An open plain stretched on all sides and permitted free movement; the wall of the hills of Judah rising 1000 feet above the level of the camp, at the distance of about three miles to the west. The name Gilgal was given in direct allusion, we are told, to the rolling away of the last trace of the degradation and "reproach" of their Egyptian slavery (Josh. 5: 9). — *Geikie*.

PRONUNCIATIONS. — A'bib; Gil'gāl; Nī'sān; Reū'ben.

INTRODUCTION.

In our last lesson, the crossing of the Jordan into the promised land was described. The present lesson begins with a review of that wonderful event, and then proceeds to complete the account till the people are well established at their first headquarters in Canaan.

10. For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hasted and passed over.

11. And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark of the LORD passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people.

12. And ¹the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them:

13. About forty thousand prepared ^a for war passed over before the LORD unto battle to the plains of Jericho.

Rev. Ver.: *a*. ready armed.

¹ Num. 32: 20, 27, 28.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Review of the Crossing. — Vers. 10-13. 10. For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan: each apparently on some firm stone in the bed of the stream (4: 3), 2000 cubits above the place where the people crossed (3: 4). **Until every thing was finished.** The priests with the ark were the representatives of God, and their position where they would be the first to be overwhelmed if the waters should break their unseen but divine barriers, was a testimony to the people that it was safe for them to cross.

God's ministers are to prove to the people that it is safe and wise to trust in the Gospel promises, by themselves fully trusting them. They are to preach what they themselves practise, and themselves have experienced. **And the people hasted:** not from fear, as many assume; for the river bed was dry far beyond their sight, and the ark of God, by which the rushing torrent was made dry ground, was above them in the watercourse. But (1) they hasted because in the soft, rich light of the early morning lay the homes and vineyards and fields which they were to possess. A few moments, and the weary waiting of years would end. (2) There may have been some innocent rivalry to be among the first to touch the further shore. (3) They hasted to do God's will. So should we hasten on to the coming of our Lord. So should we hasten on to the blessings and victories and rest of our promised land. So should we haste to do God's will, and run in the path of duty. "He that believeth shall not make haste" for any fear (Is. 28: 16); but for the joy of following him whithersoever he goeth, "thy children shall make haste" (Is. 49: 17). — *Condensed from S. Smiley.*

11. When all the people were clean passed over . . . the ark of the Lord passed over: the defence being no longer needed. The priests were the last to come over.

12. Reuben, . . . Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed: that is, only the warriors of these tribes went over, because they had accepted their portion and settled their families on the east of the Jordan. **Before the children of Israel:** not necessarily "in front of," but "in the sight of," as in Num. 8: 22. The Israelites were witnesses of the fulfilment of the pledge given them by their brethren. See the previous verse where the same words are translated "in the presence of." — *Pulpit Com.*

13. About forty thousand. The totals of these three tribes at the last census (Num. 26) were: Reuben (ver. 7), 43,730; Gad (ver. 18), 40,500; Manasseh (ver. 34), 52,700, or for the exact half, 26,350. Thus the entire force of the two and a half tribes might amount to 110,580. They therefore left more than half their number to protect their families and their dwellings. — *Ellicott.* **Before the Lord:** as represented by the ark in the river-bed. **To the plains of Jericho:** in which Gilgal, the Israelite encampment, was situated.

14. On that day the LORD ¹magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.

15. And the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,

16. Command the priests that bear the ²ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan.

17. Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan.

18. And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, *and* the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land,^b that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place,^c and flowed^e over all his banks, as *they did before*.^d

19. And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth *day* of the first month, and encamped⁴ in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.

20. And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch^e in Gilgal.

Rev. Ver.: *b*. ground; *c*. went over all its; *d*. as aforetime; *e*. set up.

¹ Josh. 3: 7.

² Ex. 25: 16, 22.

³ Josh. 3: 15.

⁴ Josh. 5: 9.

II. The River returns and fills its Usual Channel.—Vers. 14-18. 14. On that day the Lord magnified Joshua (honored him) in the sight of all Israel: so that he would be great in their eyes, like Moses. He would thus be shown to be the leader appointed by God, through whom God would give them the victory; and thus the people would trust him and obey him. **They feared him:** revered, and obeyed.

16. Command the priests . . . that they come up out of Jordan. The record of this command is repeated in order to set forth the scene of the returning waters.

18. When . . . the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land. As the waters had receded the moment the feet of the priests touched its brim, so now they return the moment they touch the land above the river bed on the other side. **The waters of Jordan returned.** The unseen barriers were taken away, the waters came down again, and the Israelites were in their land, with no way of retreat. They must fight or be destroyed. It was victory or death. And this fact no doubt gave them courage and strength. Everything depended on victory. Victory depended on God, and their faith and obedience to God.

DECISIVE STEPS. It is a good thing for us, in all matters of right and duty, to take a firm, decisive stand. And hence it is well for us to be placed sometimes where there is no retreat; where we must take an open stand or be ignominiously defeated or even destroyed. It is for this reason—at least, in part—that God allows us to meet opposition and reproach and temptation; that it is often hard to take the first stand as a Christian. The very difficulty helps make our action decisive. We cannot go back; the Jordan has rolled into its place behind us; we therefore go forward with courage, earnestness, decision, and faith.

III. The Erection of the Memorial Monument at Gilgal.—Vers. 19, 20. 19. On the tenth day of the first month: Abib, called also Nisan, comprising parts of our March and April, beginning with the new moon in March. **Encamped in Gilgal.** See *Place*. It was a good station from which to begin the conquest.

20. And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan. Twelve men had been previously chosen (3: 12), probably for their especial strength, to take each one a stone from the bed of the river "out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm" (4: 3). **Did . . . pitch in Gilgal.** A foundation of stone-work or a mound of earth was probably first laid, of considerable height, and then the twelve stones placed on the top of it; for twelve such stones as a man could carry six miles on his shoulder could scarcely have made any observable pile or pillar of memorial; but erected on such a base as we have supposed, they would be very conspicuous, and strikingly answer the purpose for which they were designed. —*Bush*. Never did triumphal column or arch, with all the magnificence of architecture, form so proper a monument of some celebrated victory as did the twelve rude stones from Jordan's channel, of the miraculous passage of Israel into Canaan. —*Scott*. These twelve stones, brought separately by representatives of each tribe, and then placed in one memorial, represented to the people their essential unity as a nation, to be consummated in their new home.

21. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What *mean* these stones?

22. Then ye shall let your children know, saying, ¹ Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.

23. For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, ² which he dried up from before us, until we were gone^f over:

24. ³ That all the people^h of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it *is* ⁴ mighty: that yeⁱ might ⁵ fear the LORD your God for ever.

Rev. Ver.: *f*, passed over; *h*, peoples; *i*, they may fear. ¹ Josh. 3: 17. ² Ex. 14: 21. ³ 1 Kings 8: 42, 43. ⁴ 2 Kings 19: 19. Ps. 106: 8. ⁵ Ex. 15: 16. ¹ Chron. 29: 12. Ps. 89: 13. ⁶ Ex. 14: 31. Deut. 6: 2. Ps. 89: 7. Jer. 10: 7.

IV. The Object of the Memorial.—Vers. 21-24. 21. When your children shall ask their fathers. These stones would afford to parents an excellent opportunity to turn to account the inquisitiveness of their children, to make them early acquainted with the wonderful works of God, and to train them up in his fear. The record of this great event might be read in the Sacred Writings; but God, who knows the frame of his creatures, kindly ordered an expedient for keeping it in more lively remembrance. We should encourage young people to seek instruction, and should be glad of everything that may afford us an occasion of making known to them the wonders of redeeming love.—*Bush*.

23. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan. The miracle is attributed not only to God, but to their God; the same God ruling then as now. Thus God would be honored in the past, but this very honor would lead the generations following to trust in God in their hour of need. The God who helped the fathers will be a very present help to the children.

24. That all the people of the earth might know. The religion of the Israelites was not narrow and selfish. It was given to them as a light is placed upon a lighthouse, to shine far and wide over the nations and call attention not to the Israelites but to the one true God. Hence, and not because the people were worthy, he gave them the victory over other nations. This miracle, and all God's dealings with his peculiar people, showed how good God was to all who would trust him; how strong he was to help; how ready to forgive; how full of loving-kindness. Thus not only this miracle, but the very defeats the nations suffered, were invitations from God for all nations and peoples to love and trust and obey him. **The hand of the Lord:** the power of God as manifested, his power to do.

APPLICATIONS. 1. The first lesson suggested is the duty of well remembering whatever the Lord has done. The blessed influences of a moment may thus be diffused over a lifetime. On the other hand, forgetfulness of our God is unspeakable loss; for as remembrance means renewal, so does forgetfulness mean forfeiture, and is one of the surest signs of unbelief. 2. These stones represent the *word and promises of God*. They were taken out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm on a rock; where each one had experienced the security. 3. Each priest stood upon his own stone, and each of the 12 appointed ones brought up each one a stone. Any one of the promises appropriated singly in an hour of need will yield far more support than a general conviction of the truth of all. Christian biography abounds with instances where an epoch of life was characterized by the vivid apprehension of some single saying out of all the many words of God. 4. It is well that there were *many stones and many witnesses*, that as human needs are definite and varied, so should be also the instrumentalities. Each true witness for God can only bear witness from his own experience and in his own way, and there will always be those who could receive no other. "Upon this stone," says one, "my feet stood firm." Each faithful confessor becomes a rock, and is built up as a living stone in that monument which witnesses to the power and wisdom of God,—his holy church. It would furnish an interesting study to consider in the case of the apostles what it was that was the personal standpoint of each, or what 12 true sayings of God would best set forth the manifoldness and adaptiveness of his truth.—*Sarah Smiley, in Fullness of Blessing*.

MEMORIALS OF THE PAST. 1. *The twelve apostles* were 12 goodly stones, taken out of the common quarries of humanity, to show before the world what forms of Godlike manliness the great Sculptor could shape and polish. "What mean ye by these stones?" From simple peasants and fishermen, such dignity and grandeur! Out of a nation so narrow and

rigid, such breadth and pliability! These are witnesses of Christ's resurrection, each of whom can say, "Christ liveth in me."—*Sarah Smiley*. 2. The Lord's Supper is a peculiarly blessed memorial. The institution of baptism and Christmas and Easter are all precious memorials.

What is their use? They are to keep great truths in mind vivid and fresh, and free from the fluctuations of opinion and speculation. They are to bring the great truths of the past into the life of the present; so that whatever progress may be made, that which is best in the past will never be lost or forgotten. They are proofs of the past, irrefragable testimony to the great facts of Christianity. They are a public and unceasing testimony to the world about God and Christ and the Gospel. Everywhere their voice is heard. They are an easy occasion and method of teaching the great truths of religion.

MODERN MEMORIALS. It is good for us to keep memorial days, as the days of the Christian year; and national days, as Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Decoration Day; and personal days, as birthdays, marriage anniversaries, and the like. It is good for us to put up memorials, and especially such as will be doing the good the ones remembered would do if living. Libraries, schools, colleges, churches, hospitals, or special portions of them, are worthy memorials of God's great acts of favor and mercy to us.—*P.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On Gilgal, see *Land and Book*, new ed., I: 388; III: 676. On memorials, the best applications are made by Miss Sarah F. Smiley, in *Fullness of Blessing*, which uses the history in the Book of Joshua as a type and analogy of Christian experience. See also *The Gospel in the Book of Joshua*; Thornley Smith's *Joshua and his Times*; Geikie's *Hours with the Bible*, II. Leslie's *Short Method with the Deists* is an excellent tract, making use of the memorials of Christianity to prove its truth.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. "Line upon line; precept upon precept." The great truths of the Bible are repeated and reviewed over and over again.

2. Ver. 10. We should haste and not dally on our way to the many blessings promised by God.

3. Vers. 12, 13. We should bring aid to our brothers and neighbors, not neglecting our own families.

4. Ver. 20. We should make and keep memorials of God's wondrous acts of mercy and love to us.

5. Ver. 21. Children should seek to learn and understand what these memorials mean.

6. Vers. 22-24. We should take special pains to instruct our children in the great truths and facts of the Gospel.

7. By memorials the blessed influence of a moment may be diffused over a lifetime.—*Smiley*.

8. On the other hand, forgetfulness of our past blessings, and of the wonderful ways of our God, is an unspeakable loss. Forgetfulness means forfeiture.—*Smiley*.

9. A lively faith will always be blessed with a clear memory, and thus forgetfulness is one of the earliest and surest symptoms of unbelief.—*Smiley*.

10. God teaches us, in the lesson, the art of instructing the young, and indeed, also all persons. We must first arouse their attention and excite an inquiring disposition. The monument of the lesson was designed to call forth questions.—*F. Johnson*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The introduction must be very brief, for the first part of the lesson itself is a review of our last lesson. Note the time and place.

SUBJECT,—MEMORIALS OF PAST MERCIES.

I. THE MIRACULOUS PATH THROUGH JORDAN (vers. 10-18). Review the crossing; why the people hastened; the position and work of the priests; the return of the waters.

Illustration. *Hasted*. An editorial in a late *Sunday-School Times*, on "Lassitudinarian Christianity," says that, years ago, before the Church of England had aroused itself and begun the hard work, on various lines, which has characterized its recent history, an English wit said that the three great schools of thought in the Anglican Establishment might be

described in three words,—"attitude, latitude, and platitude." Whatever truth there may have been in the clever jest, has been diminished in these later times. For each of the schools has been doing earnest Christian work. But in all churches there is a Lassitude party, inactive, indifferent, tired. And this party does much harm. "The Lord's business requires haste, activity, life."

II. THE MEMORIAL MONUMENT (vers. 19-24). The monument and its teaching.

Illustration. *Public Monuments.* It has been common in all times, and among all people who make any pretences to civilization, to signalize great events by the erection of public monuments. The word "monument," from *monere, to remind*, is suggestive of their purpose. Such were the triumphal arches of the Romans (as of Titus, A.D. 80; of Trajan, 114; and of Constantine, 321—of which the marble arch in Hyde Park is a model), and the obelisks, pillars, often found in ancient cities. Among the best known is the monument of London, the loftiest isolated column in the world (202 feet high), erected to commemorate the great fire of London in 1666. (The plain shaft of the Washington monument just completed is more than twice as high—555 feet.—*P.*) The scenes of great battles, too, as Waterloo, are often indicated by monuments of various kinds.—*Bib. Museum.*

Illustration. When Bunyan's Pilgrim had escaped from the castle of Giant Despair, he put up a monument of God's mercy and of warning.

Illustration. Jacob's stone at Bethel.

"Out of my stony griefs
Bethel I'll raise."

Illustration. We need to keep the past living and fresh, lest we lose much out of our lives as we go on. Thus in our house building we left the old-fashioned open fires, and used furnaces and steam heaters. Now in all our best houses we keep the modern, but also have restored the ancient, and use open fires *and* hot air.

Illustration. Many stones, each one taken from the place where some priest stood firm in the river bed. Each one bears witness in his own way, and that way is the best for some other. Twelve manner of fruits grow, each in their season, upon the Tree of Life; it is the best sustenance for the hungry to take that which is ripest. By twelve gates will the holy city be entered, four on each side; and the right gate for each of us is that which we see on our own side, and can be reached by the shortest road.—*Sarah Smiley.*

III. OUR MEMORIALS. As Christmas, Easter, Fourth of July, Decoration Day, birthdays, anniversaries; the advantages of keeping them.

IV. NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT ON OLD TESTAMENT THEMES. Our great memorial,—the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11: 23-26); the value of this memorial to ourselves and to others. Scriptures about remembering (Luke 24: 6; John 15: 20; 16: 4; 2 Pet. 1: 15; 3: 1).

LESSON IV.—OCTOBER 28.

THE FALL OF JERICO.—JOSH. 6: 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.*—HEB. 11: 30.

TIME.—April, B.C. 1451; within two or three weeks after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Gilgal, and Jericho,—a mile and a half to three miles apart.

JERICO,—*The City of Palms*, so called from a forest of majestic palms three miles broad and eight miles long, in the edge of which it was situated, was five or six miles west of the Jordan, and six or seven north of the Dead Sea. It could not have been very large, not more than one or two miles around, for it was encompassed seven times in one day by an army. Yet it was the most important city in the valley of Jordan; its walls were very thick and strong. "Not only was it conspicuous among the other Canaanitish towns, for its wall and gates and its rich temple, filled with gold, silver, iron, brass, and even Mesopotamian drapery, but its situation was such as must always have rendered its occupation necessary to any invader from that quarter. It was the key of Western Palestine, as standing at the entrance of the two main passes into the central mountains."—*Stanley.* "That Jericho was a city of great affluence is plain from the character of the spoil which was found in it. Silver and gold were evidently found in great abundance, as it was possible for Achan at the

time of the capture to appropriate 100 oz. (avoird.) of the former and 25 oz. of the latter. That richly embroidered Assyrian robes were found among the spoil (7: 21) indicates the existence of a commerce between the city and Mesopotamia." — *Watson*.

INTERVENING HISTORY. — 1. *The renewal of the covenant.* The first thing after the Israelites had gained a foothold in Canaan was to renew their covenant with God, by the rite of circumcision (5: 1-9).

2. *The celebration of the Passover,* on the fourth day after the crossing, the 14th of Nisan, just 40 years after the first passover (5: 10). They began their new life in their new home by observing their religious duties, in honor and obedience to God, by whose power alone they could have a prosperous national existence.

3. The miraculous food ceased, and henceforth they were to live on the fruits of the land (5: 11, 12).

1. Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

2. And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, ¹I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the ²king thereof, *and* the mighty men of valour.

3. And ye shall compass the city, all ye^a men of war, *and* go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

Rev. Ver.: ver. 1 in parenthesis; a. the. ¹ Josh. 2: 9, 24; 8: 1. ² Deut. 7: 24.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Orders From the Captain of the Lord's Host. — Vers. 1-5. Chapter six should begin with ver. 13 of the previous chapter. Verse 1 is a parenthetical clause between the last verse of that chapter and the second verse of this; and vers. 2-5 contain the communication which the Captain of the Lord's host (5: 13-15) made to Joshua.

Joshua was apparently reconnoitring the city of Jericho to see what steps could be taken for its capture. The fortifications were strong; the Israelites were totally unprepared with means for breaking down such walls; the only way open to them seemed to be the slow one of a siege till the city was starved into surrender; but this would be a dangerous plan, for it would give time for all the nations of Canaan to combine in one grand attack upon the defenceless Israelites. Doubtless Joshua was praying to God for light upon this most difficult of questions, when suddenly there appeared to him one with a drawn sword in his hand. He declared himself to be the Captain of the host of the Lord, — not of the earthly armies alone or chiefly, but of all the hosts of heaven, the angels, the organized forces of nature, all spiritual powers and influences. It was doubtless the eternal Word of God, who nearly fifteen centuries later was manifested in the flesh. "It would seem to have been the main purpose of this manifestation to give Joshua a sensible and vivid impression of his superior officer. To the day of his death, let him never be tempted to think of himself as at the head of the armies of Israel. Let him never forget the presence, the look, the voice, the words of his supreme commanding Officer, the real Captain of the Lord's host." — *Cowles*. Joshua's superior Officer now proceeds to show him what to do, and in what manner the city could be captured.

1. **Now Jericho was straitly** (strictly, closely) **shut up.** The original expression is peculiar and emphatic, and was doubtless designed to imply the extreme care and vigilance with which the gates had been closed and were watched, not only by night, but also by day. Accordingly the Chal. renders it, "And Jericho was shut up with iron doors and fortified with brazen bolts, so that none came out either to combat or to make offers of peace." — *Bush*. **None went out, and none came in.** It was so closely blockaded also by the Israelites from without, that there was no going out or coming in even to its own citizens. — *Bush*.

2. **And the Lord:** the Captain of the host of the Lord (5: 14, 15). After the parenthesis (ver. 1), we have what was said to Joshua at the meeting described in the previous chapter. **See, I have given into thine hand.** The victory was to be manifestly the gift of God. This was an example showing them clearly that all their victories, even those gained in ordinary warfare, were the gift of God; thus boasting was excluded and obedience enforced.

3-5. In these verses the great Captain proceeds to tell Joshua in what manner this victory

4. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven ¹trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and ²the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

5. And it shall come ^b to pass, that when they make a long *blast* with the ram's horn, *and* when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend ^c up every man straight before him.

6. And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD.

7. And he ^dsaid unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him ^e that is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD.

8. And it came ^f to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on ^h before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.

Rev. Ver.: *b*. it shall be; *c*. go up; *d*. they; *e*. let the armed men; *f*. it was so that when; *h*. before the LORD passed on. ¹ Judg. 7: 16, 22. ² Num. 10: 8.

should be obtained. We will consider them in connection with the description of what was done in obedience to these orders. The command is given in these verses in a condensed form, in order, doubtless, to avoid continual repetitions. The details of the order of the marching round the city (see in vers. 8-10), the direction that the people should shout only after the city had been encompassed seven times on the seventh day (vers. 10, 16), and the placing of the city and all its contents under a ban (vers. 17 sqq.) were, no doubt, amongst the commands given to Joshua by the Angel, though not mentioned in these verses.—*Cook*.

APPLICATIONS. 1. Every carnal heart is a Jericho shut up; God sits down before it, and displays mercy and judgment in sight of the walls thereof: it hardens itself in a wilful security, and saith, "Aha, I shall never be moved."—*Bishop Hall*. There is a great victory to be gained over sin in our own hearts. God has a right to rule there. Sin in the heart is a usurper, a tyrant, without a single right. But it is a great work. The difficulty is exceeding great. Of ourselves we cannot conquer. But the Captain of our Salvation has come, and shows how we may subdue this stronghold.

2. The sinful world is another stronghold to be conquered by God's people. It belongs of right to God. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." No human power can subdue it to righteousness. Wickedness is entrenched in customs, fashions, society, selfish interests, and pleasures. But the Captain of our Salvation has come to enable his people to gain the victory.

II. **Thirteen Processions around the City of Jericho.**—Vers. 6-14. 6. **Take up the ark of the covenant.** The ark with its attendant priests was the central object of this strange procession. Thus was God honored before both the Israelites and the Canaanites. The worship of God, and obedience to God, whose commandments were in the ark, and the mercy and love of God as shown by the mercy-seat, were to be of the first importance even in worldly matters. **Seven trumpets of rams' horns:** rather, *horns or trumpets of jubilee*; those by which was made the announcement of the new civil year, and of the jubilee (Lev. 23: 24; 25: 9). "Not the straight silver trumpets used for marshalling the hosts, and for warlike purposes (Num. 10: 2), but cornets, or metal horns, made in the shape of rams' horns, and used for religious purposes." For this was not a matter of war, but of religion and of worship, and expressed dependence on God. These trumpets called attention to the ark and to God, the symbol of whose worship it was.

7. **Pass on, and compass the city:** that is, go all around it. **Let him that is armed pass on before the ark:** as a guard of honor and of defence. The principal weapons were the sword, the bow, the spear, the sling, and the shield. As the procession was armed, the people of Jericho did not dare to attack it. With all their contempt of the peaceful procession, there must have mingled some fear, as they remembered the passage of the Jordan, and saw the ark and the robed priests; and this fear would also tend to deter them

9. And the armed men went before the priests that blew with^t the trumpets, ¹and the rearward came^k after the ark, *the priests* going^l on, and blowing with the trumpets.

10. And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make^m any noise with your voice, neither shall *any* word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.

11. Soⁿ the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about *it* once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

12. And Joshua rose early in the morning, ²and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.

13. And seven^o priests bearing seven^o trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rearward came^k after the ark of the LORD, *the priests* going^l on, and blowing with the trumpets.

14. And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

15. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about^p the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

Rev. Ver.: *i.* omit with; *k.* went; *l.* blowing with the trumpets as they went; *m.* let your voice be heard; *n.* he caused the ark of the LORD to compass; *o.* the seven; *p.* at. ¹ Num. 10: 25. ² Deut. 31: 25.

from attempting any demonstration like a sudden sortie, striking the army in the flank. With all the witticisms of God's enemies, there is mingled a certain uneasiness; and the forced mirth is often indulged in order to check or conceal it. — *Johnson*.

9. **And the rearward came after the ark.** A rearward is that portion of an army which, moving behind the main body, *gathers up* all the stragglers, takes care of any that may faint and fall by the way, sees that neither cattle nor baggage are missing, and protects or covers the rear of the host from the assault of enemies. — *Bush*. This rearward seems to have consisted of citizens, unarmed. There were 600,000 men capable of bearing arms, but probably only a selection from these went before the ark armed for war, and a large number followed without arms. The procession would then be as follows: —

(a) First, in solemn procession, were to advance armed men;

(b) Then would follow seven priests blowing continually, not the customary silver trumpets, but large horns;

(c) Thus heralded, was to follow the ark of Jehovah borne by the priests;

(d) Then were to follow "the rearward" of Israel, all in perfect silence.

10. **Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise . . . until the day I bid you shout.** No sign of triumph was to be raised, no words of rejoicing over the foe, nor of consciousness of strength. But in solemn, reverent silence, as if God alone were speaking to them, in meditation and silent prayer they were to move around the city, as if engaged in a religious service.

14. **So they did six days.** Doubtless these inhabitants of Jericho made themselves merry with this sight. Wicked men think God in jest when he is preparing for their judgment. — *Bishop Hall*. We do not, with some, think the proceeding was likely to awaken the mirth of the inhabitants of Jericho, — more likely was it to make a solemn impression upon their minds. — *Kitto*.

OBJECT OF THIS PLAN OF ATTACK. 1. To impress deeply upon the Israelites that it was the omnipotence and fidelity of Jehovah alone which could give into their hand this fortified city, the bastion of the whole land. — *Keil*. 2. To exercise Israel in unconditional faith and patient trust in the power and assistance of God. — *Keil*. 3. To show to the wicked inhabitants of Canaan that the victory was from the true God in behalf of his children, and thus to be an invitation to them to become his children, and worship and obey him. 4. The delay also afforded time for the news of this extraordinary proceeding to spread through all the country around. — *Kitto*.

III. **The Fall of Jericho.** — Vers. 15, 16. 15. **On the seventh day . . . compassed the city after the same manner seven times.** Now the Israelites begin their

16. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.

march very early, with the dawn, because they have to make the circuit seven times. If we suppose that Jericho had a compass of an hour's journey, then a formal procession like this, which moved slowly, would require at least one hour and a half to accomplish it. Seven circuits would be ten and a half hours. Allow a quarter of an hour for rest each time, added to ten and a half, makes twelve. The fall of the wall must have taken place near evening. — *Lange*.

16. At the seventh time . . . Joshua said unto the people, Shout. Of course the shouting and the blare of the trumpets had no power to overthrow the broad stone walls of the city; but it connected the people with the miracle in outward form to show that only as they were really connected with it by faith would the work be done for them.

Then the walls fell down flat, and every man went up straight before him. They destroyed every person in the city, except Rahab and her family, burned up all that was combustible, devoted the silver and gold to the Lord's treasury, and thus completely swept the city out of existence.

APPLICATIONS. 1. This was peculiarly calculated to show how easily God can make a way for the accomplishment of his own purposes, and for the salvation of his people. If it did not *typify*, it certainly well *illustrates*, the victories which the Gospel was to obtain over all the principalities and powers of earth and hell. No human force was to be used. Nothing but the simple announcement of the truth, and that by the instrumentality of weak and sinful men, was the means chosen for the destruction of idolatry, and the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom over the earth. Yet how mightily has the bare sound of the Gospel trumpet prevailed for the overthrow of Satan's empire in the world! — *Bush*. Thus by the foolishness of preaching, fitly compared to the sounding of these rams' horns, the devil's kingdom is thrown down. — *Henry*.

2. All the people shall shout in order that all may have their part in the victory. So when all Christians utter with all their might the words of Jesus, the kingdom of Satan will soon fall. By the weak things of earth God confounds the mighty (1 Cor. 1: 17-24).

3. The circumstances which led up to the fall of Jericho are an acted prophecy, as was that fall itself, which sets forth the overthrow of the powers opposed to Christ and his cause. — *Cook*.

4. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down (Heb. 11: 30). All the acts of Joshua and of the people were the fruit of faith. So by faith only will Christians conquer the world, a faith manifested in obedience to the word of our Captain. So also will they conquer their own sinful hearts by faith through the silent power of the Holy Spirit, while they are seeking to obey their Master.

5. We should never be dismayed at any outward obstacle or hindrance in the way of God's kingdom.

IV. The Justice and Love of God in the Conquest of Canaan. — (1) *In reference to the Canaanites*. 1. Their destruction is always presented in Scripture as a judgment of God sent on them because of their wickedness. They had not only fallen into total apostasy from God, but into forms of idolatry of the most degrading kind. Their false religion cannot be regarded as a mere error of judgment; cruelty the most atrocious, and unnatural crimes the most defiling, were part and parcel of its observances (cf. Lev. 18: 21 sqq.; Deut. 12: 30 sqq.). — *Cook*. The heathenism of Palestine and Syria was so foul and degrading that there is no state, even at this time, which would not put it down, if necessary, by the severest penalties. Its spread to Rome was bewailed 1500 years later by the satirists of the day, as a calamity marking the utter decay of the times (Juvenal, *Satires*, III., 62). — *Geikie*. Nor did they sin thus through ignorance. They were not a savage race, but among the more cultivated ones of the time. They had commerce, coined money, iron chariots, probably books. 2. The Canaanites had received repeated warnings and instructions, in the general Deluge, in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the holy example of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Melchizedek, and in the slow advance of Israel from Egypt to their borders, attended by miracles which caused them to tremble (Ex. 15: 14-16). 3. God not only sent them these lessons, but he bore with them many centuries in patience, while they abused his grace. 4. If God had not destroyed them they would have destroyed themselves by their own corruption, but not till they had injured many others by their example and influence. 5. It is impossible to acknowledge God as the moral governor of the earth, and not to admit

that it may be right, or even necessary, on occasions, for him to remove, summarily, from his dominions a mass of hopeless depravity, such as these nations had long been. 6. Nor is it any real objection to this view that the innocent children of the Canaanites were indiscriminately slaughtered (Josh. 6: 17, 21). To say nothing of the practical difficulties which the sparing of infants would involve, when the parents generally were put to death, and to pass by the obvious parallel supplied by the wholesale destruction caused, for example, by an earthquake; it is evident that since God's dealings with men do not terminate with this life, he can redress hereafter inequalities arising out of the acts of his providence here. 7. It can make no difference to those who are thus destroyed, whether the agent of their destruction is a natural catastrophe, like an earthquake, or an army divinely commissioned for the purpose; except that their gradual destruction by the servants of God, through marvellous miracles, was a continual invitation to them to repent, as well as a warning to the world against their sins.

(II) *In relation to the Israelites.* 1. It is objected that in commissioning the Israelites to exterminate the Canaanites, God sanctioned cruelty. But if it be sanctioning cruelty to direct a human agent to execute a lawful sentence against crime, then we are involved in the charge when we elect officers to perform the same duty towards criminals. 2. The slaughter of enemies in moments of passion, without just cause, and without due authority, may cultivate cruel instincts. But the solemn execution of the law, with no heat of passion, but with an awful sense of the crime to be avenged, and with a religious reference to the command of God, cannot produce such an evil effect. 3. To employ the Israelites in the execution of the fearful sentence, was adapted to inspire them with horror of the crimes thus severely punished, and to prevent their intimacy with the surrounding heathen and the contamination which intimacy would have produced. 4. Had not the Israelites been thus inspired with detestation of idolatry and its attendant immoralities, they would probably have sunk soon into the most degraded heathenism. Their sacred books would have been destroyed or corrupted. — *Johnson.*

(III) *In relation to mankind.* If the Jews had failed, the world would have been lost. The true religion would have vanished, the mission of Christ would have been impossible. In these contests, on the fate of one of these nations of Palestine, the happiness of the human race depended. The Israelites fought not for themselves only, but for us. It has been well shown that the results of the discipline of the Jewish nation may be summed up in two points; a settled national belief in the unity and spirituality of God, and an acknowledgment of the paramount importance of purity, as a part of morality; and further, that these two ideas were cardinal points in the education of the world. It was these two points especially which were endangered by the contact and contamination of the idolatry and sensuality of the Phenician tribes. — *Stanley.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Joshua and his Times, chap. 5; Miss Smiley's *Fullness of Blessing*, 158-239; Geikie's *Hours with the Bible*, No. 2; Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*; Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, 299-304; Dr. Vaughan's *Heroes of Faith*, p. 253; Bishop Hall's *Contemplations*; Bunyan's *Holy War*, the capture of Mansoul; *Juvenal's Satires*, 111: 62; F. Johnson's *Heroes and Judges*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The narrative of the capture of Jericho seldom fails to interest children. There is ample scope for graphic description, and the incident is full of most interesting details. There is, moreover, an opportunity afforded for enforcing, especially upon the elder children, certain points of instruction which it is of great importance they should grasp in an early stage of the history. — *Watson.* Recall the time, place, and circumstances in which we left the Israelites in our last lesson. Then touch upon the preparation for the next work, by the renewal of the covenant and the celebration of the Passover.

They would begin their new life aught.

SUBJECT, — THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH.

I. ORDERS FROM OUR CAPTAIN (vers. 1-5).

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. The Captain of our Salvation (Heb. 2: 10), described in Rev. 19: 11-16; the great work of conquering our hearts (Matt. 15: 19); of conquering the world (Mark 16: 15); the power of the enemy (Eph. 6: 12).

Illustration. An excellent illustration is given in the capture of Mansoul in Bunyan's *Holy War*.

II. THE WORK OF FAITH (vers. 6-14). Note the trial and test of faith; that the people's part was believing, and showing by obedience that they did believe.

Illustration. What makes the power of the great men in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews? Take Abraham: leave him his wealth and virtues, and at best he would have been a heathen chief. Faith gave him his religion, his son, his covenant, his divine descendant. By faith Paul moved the civilized world; by faith every missionary goes to the heathen lands now being redeemed to God. The closet of an unknown woman is a storehouse of mightier forces than the arsenals of Europe. The believing church is the church triumphant. — *C. M. Southgate.*

III. THE VICTORY OF FAITH (vers. 15, 16). Bring in the rest of the chapter, and show the righteousness and love in this total destruction.

Illustration. Primitive Christianity saw the citadel of paganism fall before it. All-powerful Rome fell prostrate when the Gospel trumpet sent forth its sonorous voice into the midst of a down-trodden and decaying world. Thus, also, in a later age did the fortress of Romish superstition crumble into ruin before Luther's hymn, which embodies the whole spirit of the Reformation. The hymn on justification by faith was like Israel's trumpets to the Papal Jericho. "Believe only, and thou shalt see the glory of God" (John 11: 40). — *E. de Presensé.*

Illustration. *Scientific illustrations of the fall of Jericho.* Mrs. Sanford, in the New York *Observer*, suggests that "The fall of Jericho is no absurd story, no undignified foolery, no miracle, but a simple scientific fact. God knew the keynote of that wall; it was struck, and it fell." And she quotes a number of scientific illustrations from Professor Lovering of Harvard College, which are at least full of interest and suggestion, though by no means proving her theory, for the solid walls of a city are very different from a slender bridge, or the walls of a factory full of machinery. "All structures, large or small, simple or complex, have a definite rate of vibration, depending on their material, size, and shape, as fixed as the fundamental note of a musical chord"; and he proves it by illustrations, some of which are: "When the bridge at Colebrooke Dale (the first iron bridge in the world), was building, a fiddler came along and said he could fiddle it down. The workmen laughed in scorn, and told him to fiddle away to his heart's content. He played until he struck the keynote of the bridge, and it swayed so violently that the astonished workmen commanded him to stop. At one time considerable annoyance was experienced in one of the mills in Lowell. Some days the building was so shaken that a pail of water would be nearly emptied, while on other days all was quiet. Experiment proved it was only when the machinery was running at a certain rate that the building was disturbed. The simple remedy was in running it slower or faster, so as to put it out of time with the building. We have here the reason of the rule observed by marching armies when they cross a bridge, viz.: Stop the music, break step, and open column, lest the measured cadence of a condensed mass of men should urge the bridge to vibrate beyond its sphere of cohesion. Neglect of this has led to fearful accidents. The celebrated engineer, Stephenson, has said there is not so much danger to a bridge when crowded with men and cattle as when men go in marching order. The Broughton bridge, near Manchester, gave way beneath the measured tread of only sixty men. A terrible disaster befell a battalion of French infantry while crossing the suspension bridge at Angiers, in France. Repeated orders were given the troops to break into sections, but in the hurry of the moment and in the rain, they disregarded the order, and the bridge, which was but twelve years old, and had been repaired the year before at a cost of \$7000, fell. Tyndall tells us that the Swiss muleteers tie up the bells of the mules, lest the tinkle bring an avalanche down. The breaking of a drinking glass by the human voice is a well-attested fact. A nightingale is said to kill by the power of his notes. If we enter the domain of music there is no end to these illustrations." — *Professor Lovering.*

LESSON V. — NOVEMBER 4.

DEFEAT AT AI. — JOSH. 7: 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.* — Ps. 119: 36.

TIME. — B.C. 1451. In the spring, not long after the last lesson.

PLACE. — *Ai*, an ancient city of 12,000 inhabitants (Josh. 8: 25), 15 or 20 miles west of Jericho, and near Bethel. It is situated 3,000 feet above Jericho, in the highlands, at the upper part of a wild ravine, the Wady Kelt, commanding the road to Jerusalem. *Ai* has been identified by Van de Velde with a place called by the natives Tell-el-Haja, that is, "The Mount of Stones," an isolated mountain 35 minutes east of Bethel. Here an old cistern and heaps of stones indicate the site of an ancient town. (See Van de Velde, *Syria and Palestine*, Vol. II., p. 279.)

PRONUNCIATIONS. — A'chăn (A'kăn); A'î; Běth-ā'văn; Cā'năanîtes (Kā'nănîtes); Cār'mî; Shěb'ārim; Zăb'dî; Zē'răh.

CIRCUMSTANCES. — When Jericho was captured, as described in our last lesson, the whole city was "devoted." Every living thing was to be destroyed, all that was combustible was to be burned up, and the silver, gold, and other metals were put into the treasury of the Lord. Not the least thing was to be appropriated to private and personal use. Whoever did this would bring a curse upon himself and the nation. So far as was known at the time, every one obeyed this command; but we see in to-day's lesson how the effects of sin revealed the fact of sin.

1. But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed^a thing: for ¹Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed^a thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

Rev. Ver.: a. devoted. ¹ Josh. 22: 20. 1 Chron. 2: 7.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Israel's Defeat at Ai. — Vers. 1-5. 1. But the children of Israel committed a trespass. The nation as a nation sinned through one individual. It was a national sin; against a command that pertained to the national life. The nation must either punish the evil-doer, or bear the sin as a nation.

THE SIN OF ONE SOMETIMES THE SIN OF THE NATION. 1. The nation is a unit, a body made up of individuals; and whatsoever is done by individuals and accepted and permitted by the nation, thus becomes the act of the nation. Hence we observe that in all history the nation suffers for the sins of the few. The best citizens pay higher taxes, make great exertions, even carry on wars, on account of the criminal classes. 2. In so far as the people were guilty of the same sins in lesser degree, as they were covetous and disobedient, they were guilty in a degree of the greater outbreaks of crime. 3. In so far as the people allowed the criminal to go unpunished, and did not use every possible method of preventing the crime, the people as a nation assumed the guilt of the crime. On the other hand, we are taught in the whole lesson that, when the nation faithfully discharges its duty in searching out and punishing sin, God no longer holds it responsible. 4. "If the nation were not held responsible for the suppression of crime, it would grow lax and indifferent, and permit crime to flourish. It is therefore wise to hold it rigidly to its responsibility." — *Johnson*. "National punishments are inflicted in this life, because nations do not exist after death. It follows, therefore, that, while a nation may suffer from the sin of an individual, that suffering is temporal, and not eternal, to those who are not personally involved in the guilt." — *Daniel Steele*.

In the accursed thing: rather, "in that which had been devoted or dedicated." — *Cook*. The original word means primarily *to shut in*, hence, *to shut up from common use, to make sacred, to consecrate*. Then, inasmuch as animals thus consecrated were slain, it is used with the idea of *to ban, to doom, to devote to destruction*. — *Johnson*. The silver and the gold were "devoted" to holy use; the living beings were "devoted" to destruction. The "accursed thing" was that which was consecrated to God, and devoted to destruction those who used it for other purposes. **Achan:** called Achar, "trouble," or "the troubler," in 1 Chron. 2: 7, undoubtedly in allusion to the effect of his conduct. **The son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi.** If the genealogy here given were complete, Achan would thus be only the fifth in descent from Judah. But there is little doubt that in this case, as in others, several generations are omitted. — *Cook*. Only the leading or noted names in the genealogy are sometimes given. **Son of Zabdi:** called also Zimri (1 Chron. 2: 6). The line of his parentage is thus recited, among other reasons, that the discredit of such a foul deed might be

2. And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Beth-el, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view^b the country. And the men went up and viewed^c Ai.

3. And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; *and* make not all the people to labour^d thither; for they *are but few*.

4. So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men; ¹and they fled before the men of Ai.

5. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them *from* before the gate *even* unto Shebarim,^e and smote them in^g the going down: ²wherefore^h the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

Rev. Ver.: *b.* spy out; *c.* spied out; *d.* toil; *e.* margin, the quarries; *g.* at; *h.* and. ¹ Lev. 26: 17. Deut. 28: 25. ² Josh. 2: 9, 11. Lev. 26: 36. Ps. 22: 14.

reflected back upon those of his ancestors who, by being remiss in their duties as parents, had been, in one sense, the procuring cause of his sin. — *Bush*. The anger of the Lord was kindled. The anger of the Lord is not an unreasoning passion, but a righteous indignation, an intense hatred of sin, that leads him to inflict deserved punishment.

2. And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai: 15 or 20 miles distant, up the ravine that led to Jerusalem and the interior of the country. Why Ai should be the next town selected for attack after Jericho, is a question which perhaps we cannot answer with certainty. But we may observe that the next step after the capture of Ai, before the further conquest of the country, was to set up the Ten Commandments in Mount Ebal, in the heart of the country, and to pronounce there the blessing and the curse which are the sanction of the law of God. It may well be that the course of the first military operations was directed to this end. The capture of Ai would put the Israelites in possession of the main road running north and south through Palestine, and enable them to reach the centre immediately. Thus the character of the war, which was no mere human enterprise, is maintained. — *Ellicott*. Beside Beth-aven: "house of vanity," *i.e.*, of idols, not far from Bethel, "house of God," 12 miles north of Jerusalem. Go up and view the country: reconnoitre; learn the way to Ai, its strength and size, its position, and the best place of attack.

3. Let not all the people go up. The easy conquest of Jericho had probably rendered the people presumptuous. They concluded that God would of course interpose for them just as he had done before. The counsel here given was based, as it would seem, upon a culpable assurance of success in the neglect of the proper means. To confide in God was right; but to expect his aid while they neglected to use their own endeavors, was nothing short of downright presumption. Even Joshua himself seems to have formed his measures without taking the usual precaution of consulting God as to his duty. The result showed that they should at least have had some intimation from heaven that a part of the force was to be dispensed with in this instance. But the truth is, they were now under the divine displeasure; sin unrepented had interrupted the communications of God's will, and where that is the case with a people or an individual, *all goes wrong*. No one can have security that he is planning or acting right, while the light of the Lord's countenance is hidden by sin. — *Bush*. For they are but few. The total population of Ai was about 12,000 (8: 25). It could therefore hardly muster three thousand warriors. It was, then, not the might of the men of Ai but the sin of Achan which caused the defeat of Israel. — *Cook*.

4. And they fled before the men of Ai. This was the first and only defeat of Joshua's armies. Sin made them weak. Not only the men of Ai, but God, was against them. They fled before the men of Ai. An unexpected resistance, and the loss of thirty-six of their number, diffused a panic, which ended in an ignominious rout. — *J., F. and B.* From before the gate (of Ai) even unto Shebarim: *i.e.*, the crevices, or ravines. (Rev. Ver. margin, "quarries.") A short distance below Ai the road passes the head of steep glens, which open into the plain of Jordan. — *Ellicott*. Smote them in the going down: *i.e.*, until they escaped into these ravines. — *Ellicott*. The hearts of the people melted, and became as water. This was not cowardice, but awe. The people had relied upon the strong hand of the Lord, which had been so wonderfully stretched out for them. From Joshua downwards, every one felt that, for some unknown reason, that support had been withdrawn. — *Pulpit Com.*

6. And Joshua ¹rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide,ⁱ he and the elders of Israel, and ²put dust upon their heads.

7. And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God,³ wherefore has thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy^k us? would to God^l we had been content, and dwelt on^m the other side Jordan!

8. O Lord, what shall I say, whenⁿ Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

9. For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear *of it*, and shall environ^o us round, and ⁴cut off our name from the earth: and ⁵what wilt thou do unto^p thy great name?

10. And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest^q thou thus upon thy face?

Rev. Ver.: *z.* evening; *k.* to cause us to perish; *l.* omit to God; *m.* beyond Jordan; *n.* after that; *o.* com. pass; *p.* for; *q.* art thou thus fallen. ¹ Gen. 37: 29, 34. ² 1 Sam. 4: 12. ³ 2 Sam. 1: 2; 13: 19. Neh-9: 1. Job 2: 12. ⁴ Ex. 5: 22. ⁵ 2 Kings 3: 10. ⁶ Ps. 83: 4. ⁷ Ex. 32: 12. Num. 14: 13.

II. Seeking for the Cause, with Humility and Prayer.—Vers. 6-9. **6. And Joshua rent his clothes.** An act expressing extreme grief and horror.—*Johnson*. **Fell to the earth upon his face:** kneeling, and leaning the head forward till it touched the ground; an attitude expressing deep humiliation and importunate supplication. **Before the ark of the Lord:** the more special emblem of God's presence, and covered with the mercy-seat; it also proclaimed his clemency; hence Joshua came before it to offer his prayer.—*Johnson*. **Until the eventide:** probably many hours; though we cannot be certain, as we do not know when the intelligence of the disaster arrived at the camp.—*Johnson*. **He and the elders of Israel:** the chief men of the nation, selected probably on account of their wisdom and prudence. **And put dust upon their heads:** another expression of deep sorrow (compare Homer's *Iliad*, 18: 25; 24: 164). Thus in three ways did Joshua and the elders express outwardly the feelings uttered in their prayer. It is proper in prayer and worship that the outward form should be the natural expression of the feelings of the spirit.

7. And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, etc. The words of Joshua sound much like the murmuring for which the people of Israel were punished in the desert (Num. 20: 3-5). But the motive from which they proceeded was quite different from that which actuated the rebellious Israelites; and God looks at the motive. **1.** Joshua was actuated (1) by pity for the people, who seemed to be in danger of destruction (ver. 7), (2) by the generous shame of a soldier whose forces are defeated (ver. 8), and (3) by jealousy for the name of Jehovah (ver. 9). **2.** Joshua did not really lose faith in the promises of God to Israel, although his faith trembled. **3.** Joshua humbly sought to know and do the will of God; the rebellious Israelites proposed, knowing it, to defy it. God is not displeased with humble boldness in prayer, if our motives are holy.—*Johnson*. **The Amorites:** mountaineers, to whom probably belonged Ai. **Would to God we had been content, etc.:** instead of undertaking the great and difficult work of conquering the strong and well-defended inhabitants of Canaan.

8. O Lord, what shall I say: what excuse; what words of hope or encouragement; what in defence of God; what in reply to enemies. The defeat made him speechless.

9. For the Canaanites . . . shall hear . . . and cut off our name from the earth. The strength of the Israelites had been in the invisible power of their God, and the impression it made upon their enemies. This defeat would destroy this impression, and give them courage and hope. **What wilt thou do unto thy great name? i.e.,** what wilt thou do *in respect to* thy great name? How wilt thou preserve its glory unstained when such a flood of obloquy shall be poured upon it by the scoffing heathen?—*Bush*. The divine purpose of making the true God known and obeyed through the Israelites would be defeated. It was not the mere destruction of a nation, but the overthrow of the true religion.

APPLICATIONS. **1.** In every trouble we should go first to God for help. **2.** We should pray with all the earnestness of our natures. **3.** We should plead for the sake of the people, rather than our own. **4.** We should be so identified with God's cause that our success honors his name. The desire that God should be honored should be first in our hearts.

III. The Cause of the Failure.—Vers. 10-12. **10. Get thee up; wherefore**

11. Israel hath sinned, and^r they have also^s transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: ¹for^t they have even taken of the accursed^u thing, and have also stolen, and ²dissembled also, and they have put^v it^w even among their own stuff.

12. ³Therefore the children of Israel could^x not stand before their enemies, but turned *their* backs before their enemies, because ⁴they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed^y from among you.

Rev. Ver.: *r.* yea; *s.* even; *t.* devoted; *u.* have even put it; *v.* cannot; *w.* the devoted thing. ¹ Josh. 6: 17, 18. ² See Acts 5: 1, 2. ³ See Num. 14: 45. Judg. 2: 14. ⁴ Deut. 7: 26. Josh. 6: 18.

liest thou thus upon thy face? Not the language of rebuke, but merely implying that it was now enough; that he had other work to do than to spend time in grieving and afflicting himself in view of what was past; that he must arise and set about discovering the accursed thing. — *Bush.* His prayer was heard, and Joshua should consider that there must be a good cause for the defeat, not in God, but among the people.

11. Israel hath sinned: through the act of one man. See on ver. 1. **And they have also** (in addition to the act that was sinful in itself) **transgressed my covenant:** of obedience to God's commands as their supreme ruler (Ex. 19: 8; 24: 7). It was only on condition of obedience that they could claim God's blessing and aid. Since they had refused to obey, God must refuse to bless, or he would place a premium upon disobedience. **For they have even taken of the accursed thing:** that which was devoted to God, and the taking of which brought one under a curse. **And have also stolen:** secretly taken and hidden things belonging to God. What *he* had taken was an Assyrian robe, probably very rich in materials, colors, and embroidery, \$100 in silver, and a bar of gold worth \$500. **And dissembled also;** added lying to theft, by pretending to obey the command and yet secretly disobeying it. Thus he lied to God, to the nation, and no doubt to individuals, for he could not easily have carried away and hidden the things he took without having to tell a falsehood to some one.

ACHAN'S SIN. Sins are almost always social; they go in clans and families, so that when we commit one sin, others almost necessarily accompany or cluster around it. Achan (1) was covetous; he broke the tenth commandment. (2) He loved riches better than God, and thus he broke the first. (3) He broke his covenant with God, and his promises of obedience (the ninth). (4) He stole (the eighth). (5) Through his crime thirty-six men were slain (the sixth). (6) His sin was against the nation as a whole, and brought grief upon them all.

12. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand. This connects the defeat with the sin. **Because they were accursed:** *i.e.*, devoted to destruction. A curse was upon them for their sin. **Except ye destroy the accursed from among you.** The only way to remove the curse was to remove the sin, even by removing the sinner, and making such an example of him that no one would repeat the sin. The criminal must be punished and removed from the nation, or the nation could not exist. The same truth holds to-day as fully as it did then. No nation can prosper which is lax in punishing its criminals. Whatever crime is left unpunished will multiply, and eat out the life of the nation. Strict justice to the few is mercy to the many.

IV. The Cause of the Defeat removed. — **PREPARATIONS.** The fact that some one had committed an accursed crime was announced, and the people were to sanctify themselves as for their most solemn meetings of worship, and to assemble the next morning. All this brought clearly before them that disobedience was the cause of their defeat, and gave Achan opportunity to confess of his own free will. — *P.*

THE TRIAL. As no one but God and the guilty ones knew who had committed the crime, it was needful to appeal to God. But the punishment was not awarded by lot only, but by the confession of the guilty one. The lot fell upon Achan, probably a prominent man in his tribe of Judah.

THE FORCED CONFESSION. To Achan himself the previous night must have been one of utter wretchedness; and it is surprising that he did not go at once and throw himself at the feet of Joshua, and make confession of his crime. Had he done so, who can tell but that there might have been some mitigation of his punishment? But he was probably still deceived by the hope that he might perchance escape detection; and thus blinded by the

god of this world, he ventured to await the approaching ordeal. — *Thornley Smith*. When the lot fell upon him, he made a confession of the way he was tempted by the sight of the precious things, how he had stolen them, and hid them in his tent. But a forced confession was no sign of true repentance; and waiting so long rendered it impossible to prove it to others, even if he did so repent. Joshua sent messengers and found the articles hidden, as Achan had confessed.

THE DESTRUCTION OF ACHAN. The guilty one having been found, it was necessary to make a terrible example of him, that all the people might fear for themselves as well as for the nation to disobey their covenant God even in secret. Achan and his cattle, his tent, and everything, were brought to the valley of Achor, and there, after stoning him to death, he and all his were burned with fire. Some think his sons and daughters were only led to the place to view the punishment; others think they were stoned and consumed with their father. In this case they must have been guilty with him, aiding him to hide the stolen goods, and hoping to enjoy the fruits of the ill-gotten gains.

WHY THE PUNISHMENT WAS SO SEVERE. 1. It was a terrible sin: (*a*) it was a wilful disobedience; (*b*) it was high treason against God; (*c*) it was sacrilege; (*d*) it was stealing, lying, coveting, and practically murder. 2. This sin struck at the very life of the nation. If the people could disobey God with impunity, the nation would soon be ruined, and the hope of the world be put out. 3. The course Achan took would have degraded God in the eyes of Israel and of the Gentiles. The people and cities of Canaan were rich; the Israelites were poor. Canaan had the resources of a somewhat high civilization; gold, silver, vessels of brass and of iron; goodly Babylonish garments — all dazzling before the eyes of a people 40 years in a barren wilderness, and antecedently 400 years afflicted in Egypt. Now, suppose the Lord had given them free license to plunder, to steal and hide, and appropriate all they could lay hands on! This movement for the conquest of Canaan would have become a savage, plundering, marauding expedition, not a whit above the demoralizing wars of all barbarous tribes upon nations largely in advance of themselves in wealth and luxury. — *Cowles*. We have many instances in the history of the middle ages, whose methods of warfare were almost identical with those of Joshua, in which the conquerors were utterly cut to pieces, because they gave themselves up to license after victory. — *Johnson*. 4. And yet further, these fascinating spoils — these glittering prizes of gold and silver, and these ornaments of the cultured Canaanites — were linked in on every hand with idolatry.

THE FALL OF AI. The accursed thing having been removed, Joshua skilfully plans another campaign against the city. God is with them now, but none the less do they use every human means, and soon they gain a complete victory.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

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PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Vers. 1-5. The sin of one man is a trouble to the whole community in which he lives; to his family, to his friends, and to all about him (vers. 6-15). — *Johnson*.
2. The whole community is in some sense responsible for the offences of every criminal which it produces or harbors.
3. Sometimes God's people must suffer temporary defeat in order to show them their weakness and sin, and lead them to heart-searchings and the casting out of all evil.
4. The greatest failures often happen in the little things of life where they are least expected.
5. Vers. 6-9. God is our refuge in trouble.
6. Nothing is more grievous to a gracious soul than dishonor done to God's name. This should be our concern more than anything else, the end of all our desires; we cannot urge a better plea. — *Henry*.
7. Ver. 10. There is a time to pray and a time for action.

8. Vers. 11, 12. Wealth held in trust for God, kept as a devoted thing, is not only a blessing, but a very necessity. But gold apart from God is still the accursed thing.—*Smiley*.

9. Be sure your sin will find you out.

10. There is a time when confession of sin, and sorrow for it, come too late for escape from its penalty. The irrevocableness of the past is a terrible thing.

11. Sin is always folly.

12. The only way to avoid sin in action is to quench its incipient workings in the heart, to modify sinful desires.—*Bush*.

13. Those who partake of the sin partake also of its punishment.

14. The country, the church, and the heart, are safe only when the accursed things are purified out of them.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The sad history of Achan has many points of melancholy interest. The practical teaching of the incident is most valuable. It is such, moreover, as can be brought within the grasp of the youngest children. Put briefly, it is this: the danger of the downward path of sin, the certainty of misery following in the track of sin.—*Watson*. Connect this lesson with the last by a brief review.

SUBJECT,—FAILURE AND TROUBLE THROUGH SIN.

I. THE FAILURE (vers. 1-5).

Illustration. *All partakers of the sin of one.* An aching tooth, an inflamed organ, a diseased limb, makes the whole body sick. As Paul says, "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." This is doubly true when there is disease or weakness pervading the body. An injury which does little harm to a perfectly healthy body will bring great suffering, and even death, to a diseased body. The same holds true of any organized body of men,—a family, a school, a church, a town, a nation. The sins and disgrace of one member injure and disgrace all.—*P.*

Illustration. *Weakness through sin* (ver. 5). Lord Marmion, the proudest and bravest of princes, was weak and dumb when he met one whose presence awoke his guilty conscience.

"Thus oft it haps that when within
They shrink at sense of secret sin,
A feather daunts the brave;—

A fool's wild speech confounds the wise,
And proudest princes veil their eyes
Before their meanest slave."—*Scott*.

II. SEEKING THE CAUSE OF THE FAILURE (vers. 6-9).

Illustration. *Rending clothes and casting dust on the head.* Both were known among the Greeks. (See Lucian, *De Luctu*, 12.) Homer mentions the custom (*Iliad*, 18). Pope's translation runs thus:—

"Cast on the ground, with furious hands he spread
The scorching ashes o'er his graceful head.
His purple garments and his golden hairs,
Those he deforms with dust, and these he tears."—*Cam. Bible*.

III. SIN THE CAUSE OF THE FAILURE (vers. 10-12).

Illustration. *Your sin will find you out.* See the cases of Cain and of Judas. "Lord, is it I?" No true prosperity with sin in the heart. Nearly every ruin of a nation has been caused by sin left to go unpunished.

IV. THE PUNISHMENT. The reasons for the severity,—the sin involving others besides the sinner.

Illustration. Pliny relates a story of the setting up of an obelisk like that lately set up in Central Park, New York. The stone was to stand 99 feet in height; 20,000 workmen were to pull at the ropes and to work the hoisting apparatus. There was great responsibility and risk in the operation. The king resorted to a singular expedient to ensure the best attention and skill from the engineer. He ordered the engineer's own son to be bound to the apex, so that his heart as well as his head should be under the sternest tension. The kingdom of Christ in our homes and in our churches is the great spiritual erection of our times. Our own sons are bound to the obelisk; our children will share the fate controlled by our fidelity. We cannot escape this fearful issue.—*Rev. F. G. Clark, D.D.*

LESSON VI. — NOVEMBER II.

CALEB'S INHERITANCE. — JOSH. 14: 5-15.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* — Ps. 37: 3.

TIME. — B.C. 1444 or 1445, more than six years after the last lesson. Caleb was 40 years old when he went to spy out the land (14: 7), less than a year and a half after the Exodus. The crossing of the Jordan was 40 years after the Exodus, or 38½ after the excursion of the spies. Therefore Caleb was between 78 and 79 years old at the crossing of the Jordan. But at the time of this lesson he was 85 (ver. 10), so that more than six years must have passed since the crossing in the spring of B.C. 1451.

PLACE. — Gilgal, near the Jordan, and a short distance from the site of Jericho. It was the first place of encampment by the Israelites within the limits of the promised land. See Lesson II. of this Quarter.

JOSHUA. — Now about 90 years old (see Lesson I.), having completed his wars of conquest.

PRONUNCIATIONS. — A'î; An'ākîm; Ar'bā; Cāl'ēb; Gil'gāl; Jēphūn'nēh; Kā'dēsh-bār'nēā; Kēn'ēzites; Kīr'jāth-ār'bā.

INTERVENING HISTORY. — Immediately after the capture of Ai, the way into the interior now being open, the Israelites proceeded to fulfil the great religious duty commanded by Moses (Deut. 27: 2-8). With the tribes stationed on the sloping sides of mounts Ebal and Gerizim, the law was read and the people assented to it as their law in their new home. A worthy beginning, — a profession of religion, a taking of the oath of allegiance. When the kings of the many nations which held Palestine heard that Jericho and Ai were taken, and that the Israelites had marched into the very heart of the country and performed religious rites at Gerizim and Ebal, they formed a great league to resist the invaders (9: 1, 2). But while their necessary negotiations were being made, an event occurred which greatly confused their plans and led to their ultimate defeat. As Ai had commanded the pass from the Jordan into the highlands, so Gibeon commanded the pass of Beth-horon which led down on the western side of those highlands, into the maritime plain which stretched along the Mediterranean coast. It would be therefore the next object of attack. It was one of the largest cities of Canaan, and had as dependencies or confederates several neighboring towns (9: 17). Its men were distinguished for their warlike achievements (10: 2). It seems to have had no king. Its government seems to have differed from that of all the surrounding nations, being either an aristocracy or a republic. Embassadors from this neighboring people came to Joshua in old and worn clothes, as if from a long journey, and palmed themselves off on the Israelites as messengers from a far country seeking an alliance in order to save their city from the destruction threatened against all Canaanites. This was hastily promised them with a sacred oath, which was kept even after the deceit was discovered (9: 1-27). Learning that Gibeon had submitted, the neighboring chiefs assembled and attacked it; but Joshua, coming up, defeated them with great slaughter. It was at this time that the sun stood still and lengthened out the day, perhaps by means of the refraction of the atmosphere. The southern half of the league mentioned in Josh. 9: 1, 2, was crushed, and the leader turned his attention to the northern half. The complete subjugation occupied about six years, so that the land could be divided among the tribes.

5. ¹As the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land.

¹ Num. 35: 2. Josh. 21: 2.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Division of the Land among the Tribes. — Ver. 5. As the Lord commanded Moses . . . they divided the land. This chapter forms the introduction to an account of the allocation of the land west of Jordan, or Canaan proper, to the nine tribes and a half. It was also made by lot in presence of a select number of superintendents,

6. Then the children of Judah came^a unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the ¹Kenezite^b said unto him, Thou knowest ²the thing that the LORD said^c unto Moses the man of God concerning me and ^dthee in ³Kadesh-barnea.

7. Forty years old *was* I when Moses the servant of the LORD ⁴sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy^e out the land; and I brought him word again as *it was* in mine heart.

Rev. Ver.: *a.* drew nigh; *b.* Kenizzite; *c.* spake; *d.* and concerning; *e.* spy. ¹ Num. 32: 12. Josh. 15: 17.

² Num. 14: 24, 30. Deut. 1: 36, 38. ³ Num. 13: 26. ⁴ Num. 13: 6; 14: 6.

appointed according to divine directions given to Moses (see Num. 34: 16-29). — *J., F. and B.* The land was not actually divided till after Caleb had received his portion; but they now "entered upon the business of dividing it, they took the preliminary measures, they consulted together and settled the manner in which it should be done."

This was the force of the lot: there were ten lots cast in such a manner as to decide that some were to be next to the Egyptians, some to have the sea-coasts, some to occupy the higher ground, and some to settle in the valleys. When this was done, it remained for the heads of the nation to determine the boundaries of the different territories according to some equitable standard. — *Calvin.* The lot seems to have had reference to situation alone, and not to extent of territory at all. — *Clericus.*

Two tribes and a half had their portion east of the Jordan; Levi had no inheritance as a tribe, but had certain cities assigned to them in various parts, so that they, as religious teachers, would be distributed among the people to be taught. But to make the number of the tribes the full number of twelve, Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, were each made the head of a tribe, so that the division now to be made was among nine tribes and a half, requiring ten lots.

The land was divided up among the people. Each family had its farm. And they had an absolute title to it which could not be forever alienated, but at the end of every 50 years there was to be a restoration, to each family, of the family portion. This did not include city property. Thus perpetual poverty was excluded from the family; yet each person suffered for neglect and idleness, and was rewarded for diligence.

II. The Faithful Service. — Vers. 6-8. 6. Then: while they were in Gilgal preparing to make the division, but before it was made. The children of Judah came. The children of Judah, — that is, probably, the heads and chief men, — accompanied Caleb, who belonged to the same tribe, in order to testify their consent to the measure, and to aid and countenance him in obtaining the object of his request. As Caleb was one of the twelve whom God had chosen to superintend the partition of the land (Num. 34: 12), it might seem, if he came unattended, that he designed to take advantage of his authority as a commissioner to promote his public interest; he therefore takes his brethren along with him to preclude any such imputation. — *Bush.* In Gilgal: see *Place*. Here the casting of the lots commenced. Caleb the son of Jephunneh. Caleb was a prince of the tribe of Judah, a descendant of Hezron, the son of Pharez, and grandson of Judah (1 Chron. 2: 5, 18, 25). He is first mentioned in the list of the princes who were sent to search the land of Canaan in the second year of the Exodus (Num. 13: 6). — *Cam. Bible.* Kenezite: of the family of Kenez, or Kenaz (15: 17). The thing that the Lord said unto Moses... concerning me: given in ver. 9. In Kadesh-barnea: from which place the spies had been sent, and which had been the headquarters of the Israelites for nearly 38 years in the wilderness. For location, etc., see Lesson X., 3d Quar.

7. Forty years old was I. As the time he was sent out was a year and a few months after the Exodus, he must have been between 38 and 39 at the time of the Exodus. Brought him word again as it was in mine heart: made a true and honest statement as it was in my heart: spake sincerely: uttered the real sentiments of my heart. His conscience bore him witness, and now enabled him to say, that neither fear nor favor influenced him on that occasion. It has been remarked that Caleb's name signifies, *according to the heart*. — *Bush.* The other spies spoke no less from their heart than he did from his. But their hearts were not right with God; they were filled with fear and unbelief; and although they did speak from their hearts the truth as it appeared to them, they spoke wrongly and falsely, because there was a disharmony between their spirits and the Spirit of God. — *Kitto.*

8. Nevertheless ¹my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I ²wholly followed the LORD my God.

9. And Moses sware on that day, saying, ³Surely the land ⁴whereon thy feet⁷ have trodden shall be^h thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.

10. And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive ⁵as he said,⁴ these forty and five years, even^k since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while *the children^l of Israel* wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I *am* this day fourscore and five years old.

11. ⁶As yet I *am as* strong this day as *I was* in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength *was* then, even so *is* my strength now, for war, both^m to go⁷ out, and to come in.

Rev. Ver.: *g.* foot hath; *h.* be an inheritance to thee and to thy children; *i.* spake; *k.* from the time that; *l.* omit the children of; *m.* and. ¹ Num. 13: 31, 32. Deut. 1: 28. ² Num. 14: 24. Deut. 1: 36. ³ Num. 14: 23, 24. Deut. 1: 36. Josh. 1: 3. ⁴ Num. 13: 22. ⁵ Num. 14: 30. ⁶ See Deut. 34: 7. ⁷ Deut. 31: 2.

8. Nevertheless my brethren (the other spies) . . . made the heart of the people melt: with discouragement and fear. But I wholly followed the Lord: by being true to his convictions, by putting his trust in God, and remembering all the wonderful deeds he had done, and the promises he had made. The story of his faithfulness, although the whole nation, save two, were against him, and of his efforts to encourage the people, is told in Num. 13 and 14, and considered in Lesson X. of 3d Quar.

GODLINESS BEGETS MANLINESS. Caleb was so strong and manly because "he wholly followed the Lord." What a charm there is in *manliness*,—in its vigor, its honesty, in its fortitude and daring. What worth, what happy union of strength and spirit, what joy! "Add to your faith *manliness*," says Peter. Now observe the magnificent manliness of Caleb. It gleams through his report as a spy. It is apparent in this choice of the as yet unconquered territory. It comes out in the energy of his old age. And this simple quality in one man was of incalculable service to Israel. We all need this quality, men and women.

"Our doubts are traitors,
And make us lose the good we oft might win,
By fearing to attempt."

More manliness would mean less falseness, less failure, less wretchedness of apprehension, more enterprise and grand success. And godliness begets it. For godliness gives larger thought, greater dignity, scope for grand purposes, consciousness of help laid up in all providential law and processes. By communion with God man attains calmness, wisdom, strength, and help. We are short of manliness because short of godliness.—*R. Glover.*

THE NOBLE CHARACTER OF CALEB. (1) Independence; (2) truth; (3) courage; (4) unselfishness; (5) whole-hearted devotion to God.—*W. F. Adeney.*

III. The Promise.—Ver. 9. Moses sware on that day, saying. This promise is recorded in Num. 14: 24; Deut. 1: 36. The definite part of the land is not stated in either place, nor in this verse, but ver. 12 shows that some definite place was understood; viz., Hebron, in whose vicinity grew the grapes of Eshcol which the spies brought as a specimen of the fruits of the land. Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance. Forty-five years before he had gone into this land, and it had been promised him. He had, as it were, taken the deed of the land, but not taken possession. Why was the fulfilment so long delayed? Because its fulfilment before this would have been of no use to him, or worse than useless. He could not have enjoyed the land till it was conquered by the Israelites. So the fulfilment of many a promise has been delayed, because we were not prepared to receive it, or it would have been no blessing had it come sooner. The delay also is a test of our faith, to prove whether we will wholly follow the Lord. Only to such can the best blessings come.—*P.*

IV. The Promise fulfilled.—Vers. 10-15. FIRST, *long life*. 10. I am this day fourscore and five years old. Caleb was now, with the exception of Joshua, not only the oldest man in all Israel, but was *twenty years* older than any of them; for all that were above twenty when he was forty, had died in the wilderness.—*Bush.*

SECOND, *strength for usefulness and work*. 11. As yet I am as strong, etc. My ability not only for counsel, but for action, remains unimpaired; I am as competent as ever for the hard services and difficult exploits of war.—*Bush.* He had escaped one of the

12. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how ¹the Anakim *were* there, and *that* the cities *were* great and fenced: ²if soⁿ be the LORD *will be* with me, then^o I ³shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said.^p

13. And Joshua ⁴blessed him, and ⁵gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

14. ⁶Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite^r unto this day; because that he wholly followed the LORD God^s of Israel.

Rev. Ver.: *n.* it may be that; *o.* and; *p.* spake; *r.* Kenizzite; *s.* the God. ¹ Num. 13:28, 33. ² Ps. 18:32, 34; 60:12. Rom. 8:31. ³ Josh. 15:14. Judg. 1:20. ⁴ Josh. 22:6. ⁵ Josh. 10:37; 15:13. Judg. 1:20. 1 Chron. 6:55, 56. ⁶ Josh. 21:12.

greatest trials of old age, — the weakening of the powers, the necessity of standing one side and letting others do the work and bear the burdens of the world. Hence the young should be especially careful to give all honor to the old, and give them those positions for which increasing wisdom but declining strength fits them. For war: which required the utmost strength and endurance. Both to go out and to come in: a proverbial phrase, equivalent to performing all the duties belonging to an official station. — *Bush*.

THIRD, *his temporal inheritance*. 12. Now therefore give me this mountain: not a particular mountain, but the mountainous region in which Hebron was situated. Hebron is the highest city of southern Palestine, being six hundred feet higher than Jerusalem, and two thousand six hundred feet above the Mediterranean. The mountain near it rises still higher, being the highest point of southern Palestine. Hence the expression of Josh. 20:7: "Hebron is the mountain of Judah." — *Johnson*. For thou heardest in that day how the Anakim (a race of giants) were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: fortified with strong walls. These things are mentioned because it shows how great his faith was that in the presence of the seemingly insurmountable difficulties he could believe the promise of God to overcome them. If so be the Lord will be with me: not expressing doubt, but a statement of the only means by which he could succeed. I shall be able to drive them out. His faith had not diminished. He believed 45 years before, and he still believed in God's promise and help. His whole experience during those years tended to strengthen his faith.

"ANAKIM" IN OUR INHERITANCE. Some of the highest blessings are fenced about with the greatest difficulties. 1. No earthly inheritance is without its peculiar disadvantages. Some of the "Anakims" which resist us in our efforts to fulfil our mission are (a) the evil in our own heart, *e.g.*, indolence, fear, earthliness; (b) the temptations of the world, arising from bad examples, customs, distracting pleasures; (c) direct hindrance in persecution and opposition, growing out of the world's ignorance, prejudice, envy, etc. 2. Nevertheless it is best for us, as it was for Caleb, to have such an inheritance. Difficulties (a) try our faith and courage; (b) give scope for energy and devotion; (c) make the ultimate peace the more blessed. 3. Apply these truths (a) to private life; (b) to church work and the difficulties in evangelizing the world; (c) to public interests, and the hindrances which stay the progress of liberty, civilization, and national prosperity. — *W. F. Adeney*.

MEANS FOR OVERCOMING THE "ANAKIM." 1. *God with us*. This fact is Caleb's ground of confidence. God does not only approve of the right: he aids it. 2. *Brave effort*. Caleb says, "I shall be able to drive them out." He names God's help first as indispensable; but he does not stay with this. God's grace is no excuse for man's indolence. God fights for us by fighting in us. Ours is the effort, while his is the strength. — *W. F. Adeney*.

FOURTH. 13. And Joshua blessed him: joined with his gratitude for the courageous declaration, an expression of his good wishes, and prayer for the success of his undertaking. — *Lange*. Hebron for an inheritance. The fertile winding valley of Hebron, upon which Caleb set his heart, must have been one of the most beautiful spots in the land. — *Watson*. It also had precious memories connected with it. Abraham and the patriarchs had dwelt there. From this place Jacob started for Egypt. Shortly after the time of Christ it was captured and burned by the Romans. The present population is probably about 5,000, most of whom are fierce and fanatical Mohammedans; there are but few Jews and Christians.

14. Unto this day: when the book was written, or perhaps when it was revised by some later hand.

15. And^t the ¹name of Hebron before^u *was* Kirjath-arba^w; *which Arba was a^w great man among the Anakim.* ²And the land had rest from war.

Rev. Ver.: *t.* now; *u.* beforetime; *v.* Kiriath-arba; *w.* the greatest man.

¹ Gen. 23: 2. Josh. 15: 13.

² Josh. 11: 23.

15. Kirjath-arba: *i.e.*, City of Arba. Arba was a giant, a leader of the Anakim, who had conquered the city.

FIFTH, *rest.* And the land had rest from war: after more than six years of fighting. This rest gave opportunity for the distribution of the land among the tribes.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Ver. 6. There is more presumption in declining and neglecting God's promises, than in urging their performance. — *Bush.*

2. Ver. 7. A youth well-spent usually leads to a happy old age, while a youth spent in rebellion against God usually leads to premature death, or to an age full of pain and penury. — *Johnson.*

3. Vers. 7, 8. Faithfulness in early life reaps a large reward in later years. There is no greater mistake than to imagine that indolence, carelessness, "wild oats," in youth can lead to a successful life. "Whatsoever a man soweth THAT must he reap."

4. "Wholly following the Lord" is the way to noble character, large usefulness, and true success.

5. Ver. 9. Only that can be ours "which our feet tread upon." There is much we wish, dream about, hope for, which never becomes ours to enjoy, because we do not take possession of it.

6. Oh, how profitable is godliness! "It is profitable unto all things, and has the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4: 8; Matt. 6: 33). — *Stark.*

7. Ver. 12. The fulfilment of God's promises is often delayed, but never fails. It is delayed only till the best time, often the only possible time, comes. An earlier fulfilment of the promise to Caleb would have been an evil, not a good.

8. Ver. 13. The blessing of the aged is a most desirable good.

9. Ver. 15. There are "Anakim" in our inheritance; difficulties and dangers and temptations in the way. But if we overcome them in the strength of the Lord our inheritance is better for having to overcome them. We seldom fully enjoy or know the value of that which we do not gain by toil.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

For introduction, give a brief résumé of the intervening history during the six years of conquest.

SUBJECT, — FAITHFULNESS REWARDED.

I. THE FAITHFUL SERVICE (vers. 5-8). The tribes among whom the land was to be divided (14: 2-4). Note the inheritance of Levi (13: 14, 33; 14: 4). This the minister's inheritance now. Caleb and his claim. What he had done, and at what cost. Review Lesson X., 3d Quar.

Illustration. *Caleb wholly followed the Lord.* Caleb means "all heart." Break a piece of red glass painted some four hundred years since, and it will be found as red in the middle as on the outsides; the color is not only on it, but in it and through it. Whereas, now (A.D. 1660) all art can perform is only to fix the red on one side of the glass, and that ofttime so faint and fading that within a few years it falleth off, and looketh piebald to the eye. I suspect a more important mystery is much lost in our age; viz., the transmitting of piety clean through the heart, that a man become inside and outside alike. *Heart perfect:* oh, the finest of wares! *All his days:* oh, the largest of measures! — *Fuller.*

Illustration. Charcoal and diamond are the same material — carbon. One absorbs the light, the other reflects it. There are charcoal Christians and diamond Christians. Examine their creeds, they are the same; examine their religious experiences before a church committee, they are the same. But one is gloomy and the other glistens; one is dark, the other luminous. Arise, shine! for thy light is come: this is the message of the prophet to Christian men as to Christian nations. — *S. S. Times.*

II. THE SURE PROMISE (vers. 9, 10). Delayed 45 years, but fulfilled the first possible moment.

Illustration. THE EMPEROR MOTH. *God's time is the best.* I kept for nearly a year the flask-shaped cocoon of an emperor moth. It is very peculiar in its construction. A narrow opening is left in the neck of the flask, through which the perfect insect forces its way, so that a forsaken cocoon is as entire as one still tenanted, no rupture of the interlacing fibres having taken place. The great disproportion between the means of egress and the size of the imprisoned insect makes one wonder how the exit is ever accomplished at all — and it never is without great labor and difficulty. It is supposed that the pressure to which the moth's body is subjected in passing through such a narrow opening, is a provision of nature for forcing the juices into the vessels of the wings, these being less developed at the period of emerging from the chrysalis than they are in other insects. I happened to witness the first efforts of my prisoned moth to escape from its long confinement. During a whole forenoon, from time to time, I watched it, patiently striving and struggling to get out. It never seemed able to get beyond a certain point, and at last my patience was exhausted. I thought I was wiser and more compassionate than its Maker, and I resolved to give it a helping hand. With the point of my scissors I snipped the confining threads to make the exit just a very little easier, and lo! immediately, and with perfect ease, out crawled my moth, dragging a huge swollen body and little shrivelled wings. In vain I watched to see that marvellous process of expansion in which these silently and swiftly develop before one's eyes; and as I traced the exquisite spots and markings of divers colors which were all there in miniature, I longed to see these assume their due proportions, and the creature to appear in all its perfect beauty, as it is, in truth, one of the loveliest of its kind. But I looked in vain. My false tenderness had proved its ruin. It never was anything but a stunted abortion, crawling painfully through that brief life which it should have spent flying through the air on rainbow wings. The lesson I got that day has often stood me in good stead. — *Family Treasury*.

III. THE PROMISE FULFILLED (vers. 11-15). Note the different items in Caleb's blessing. Note also the "Anakim" in his inheritance (ver. 12; Josh. 15:13, 14), and how he took possession of his inheritance only by overcoming in God's strength.

IV. NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT ON OLD TESTAMENT THEMES. Following God with all the heart (Matt. 22:37; Rom. 8:16; 12:1). Religion is best for this life as well as the next (Matt. 6:33). Our inheritance (Rom. 8:17; Matt. 7:11; 1 Tim. 4:8; Eph. 6:3). The "Anakim" in our inheritance (Eph. 6:12; 1 John 2:15, 16; Luke 21:34). The means of victory (1 John 5:4; Rom. 7:24, 25).

LESSON VII. — NOVEMBER 18.

HELPING ONE ANOTHER. — JOSH. 21:43-45; 22:1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*
— GAL. 6:2.

TIME. — B.C. 1444. Not very long after the last lesson.

PLACE. — Joshua's capital seems to have been at Shiloh (ver. 9; 18:1), where the tabernacle and its contents remained during nearly the whole period of the Judges. It was in the tribe of Ephraim, "17 miles north of Jerusalem and half-way between Bethel and Shechem, being 9 or 10 miles from each." — *Schaff*. Its modern name is Seilun.

JOSHUA. — About 90 years old.

THE CONQUEST. — Completed so far as to allow the Israelites to dwell in peace.

THE LAND DIVIDED. — Nine and a half tribes west of the Jordan, and two and a half on the east.

PRONUNCIATIONS. — Bā'shan; Găd'ites; Gil'gāl; Shē'chem (Shē'kēm); Shī'lōh.

INTRODUCTION.

After Caleb had received his promised inheritance, the allotment of Canaan to the nine and one-half tribes began at Gilgal. Two tribes then received their portion, but for some reason there was a delay in regard to the rest, probably because they had become so accustomed to their roaming life that they did not wish to settle within definite bounds. But

Joshua urged them, and the allotment proceeded; but it was now made at Shiloh, whither the tabernacle was removed. The first verses of the lesson are the concluding statements in view of the completion of the conquest.

43. And^a the LORD gave unto Israel¹ all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers ; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.

44. ²And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers : and ³there stood not a man of all their enemies before them ; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand.

45. ⁴There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel ; all came to pass.

Rev. Ver.: a. so. ¹ Gen. 13: 15; 15: 18; 26: 3; 28: 4, 13. ² Josh. 11: 23; 22: 4. ³ Deut. 7: 24.
⁴ Josh. 23: 14.

EXPLANATORY.

I. God's Promises Fulfilled. — Vers. 43-45. 43. **And the Lord gave unto Israel:** by leading them to the promised land; by giving them strength to conquer it; and by the distribution of the land among the tribes. **All the land which he sware to give unto their fathers.** See Gen. 15: 18; Num. 34: 1-12; Josh. 1: 4. It extended from the desert and the river of Egypt on the south, to Lebanon on the north, and the Euphrates on the northeast, and was bounded by the Mediterranean on the west. **And they possessed it, and dwelt therein.** They lived in it, and had actual possession of as much as they could occupy; but only in David's and Solomon's time did they govern the whole extent promised. But God fulfilled his part of the covenant; he gave the whole to them, and they could have had actual possession at any time if they had done their part. It is as if a father had deeded a farm to his son; given him a perfect title and full possession; but the son was idle and permitted a part of the land to go to weeds. Still the *gift* was perfect, and the son lived on the farm.

CANAANITES IN THE PROMISED LAND. The Canaanites were not wholly driven out (Judg. 1: 21, 36). They were indeed scattered, discouraged, broken in strength, and with God's aid could have been easily overcome. It was best that they should not be annihilated at once before the Israelites could take possession (Deut. 7: 22), lest the wild beasts increase too fast in the wild lands; but the Israelites should have continued the warfare till the land was possessed only by God's own people (Deut. 7: 23). On account of this neglect, they were led into idolatry and other sins, and were troubled for a thousand years. A thorough conquest at first would have saved them ages of suffering and sinning.

It is the same with the Canaanites in our own hearts. The victory over sin cannot be gained in a day, by one great battle. It is a war, not a battle. But God's people should make a constant warfare, and be constant victors. Every sin left in the heart, every faculty or power not wholly consecrated to Christ, every lust unsubdued, will be a trouble and a sorrow all our days. The only true way, the only easy way, to live a Christian life is to drive out every sin from the soul, and let only the holy and heavenly remain.

44. **And there stood not a man of all their enemies before them.** For even though the Canaanites were not all exterminated, yet those who remained did not venture upon an attack on the Israelites so long as they remained loyal and steadfast to their invisible King. — *Cam. Bible.* And their complete dispossession could have been effected at any time by the divine aid which was never wanting when sought. — *Cook.* Nothing but their own cowardice prevented them from enjoying the blessings of God in all their fulness. — *Calvin.*

45. **There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken.** The inviolable truth of God's promise, and the performance of it to the utmost, is what all the saints have been ready to bear their testimony to; and if in anything it has seemed to come short, they have been as ready to own that they themselves must bear all the blame. — *Henry.* In due season all the promises of God will be accomplished to his true people; and their believing hope and patient waiting and self-denying obedience will terminate in joyful songs of triumph and thankful celebrations of his faithfulness, love, and power. Then it will be universally acknowledged that there hath not failed aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken; nay, that he has exceeded their largest expectations, and made them more than conquerors, and brought them to their delightful rest and inheritance. — *Bush.*

1. Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh,

2. And said unto them, Ye have kept¹ all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you,² and have obeyed³ my voice in all that I commanded you:

3. Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God.

4. And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised⁴ them: therefore now return⁵ ye, and get you unto your tents, and⁶ unto the land of your possession,³ which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on⁷ the other side Jordan.

Rev. Ver.: *b.* hearkened unto; *c.* spake unto; *d.* turn ye; *e.* omit and; *g.* beyond Jordan. ¹ Num. 32:20. Deut. 3:18. ² Josh. 1:16, 17. ³ Num. 32:33. Deut. 29:8. Josh. 13:8.

GOD FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISES. 1. God's nature is such that he *must* be faithful to what he has promised. It is impossible that One supreme in love, justice, truth, wisdom, and power could ever fail in his word. 2. The orderly procession of nature, never failing, never erring, never changing in its principles, is an assurance of the steadfastness of the God who created and governs nature. 3. God's faithfulness to his promises in the past is the assurance and proof that he will fulfil them in the future.

II. Return of the Troops of Two and a half Tribes to their Home.—Vers. 1-4. 1. Then Joshua called the Reubenites, . . . Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh: that is, the 40,000 soldiers of these tribes who had crossed the Jordan to help their brethren in the conquest for Canaan (4:12, 13). Their families with a portion of the men had remained in the country of Gilead, east of the Jordan, where they had chosen their home (Num. 32:1-33).

2. Ye have kept all that Moses . . . commanded you: that if they took their inheritance in Gilead, they should yet aid their brethren in their war (Num. 32:6, 7, 16, 17).

3. Ye have not left your brethren these many days: probably for nearly seven years (see Lesson V.). Yet it is very possible that in the intervals of action, and when the rest of the army had retired into winter-quarters, some of them at least may have visited their families across the Jordan, or been relieved by other detachments, though we have no clear intimation that this was the fact. Certain it is, that these two tribes and a half had always their quota of men, originally amounting to 40,000, in readiness at their respective posts, for any service to which they might be called; and after so long a delay we can easily imagine how ardently they must have longed for the period of their release, when they could return to their peaceful homes to be met with a joyful welcome by their wives and children. But like faithful soldiers they await the full close of the war and an honorable discharge. Had they departed sooner, they would have been recalled as fugitives or branded as cowards; now they retire with blessings and applause. So though our home in heaven be ever so attractive, we are required to remain contentedly on earth till our warfare be accomplished, and instead of anticipating our removal, to wait for a due discharge at the hands of our divine leader.—*Bush.*

4. Rest . . . as he promised them (Deut. 28:1, 9; Josh. 1:2-9).

THE BROTHERLY SERVICE. This is characterized by the following points of merit:

1. *Obedience to discipline.* Soldiers, servants, employees, all persons under authority, should recognize the duty of loyal obedience from the heart, and perform it (*a*) conscientiously—"not with eye-service as men-pleasers"; (*b*) diligently—working as laboriously as if for their own pleasure; and (*c*) cheerfully. 2. *Brotherly kindness.* These tribes had not left their brethren. Humanity, patriotism, and Christianity should lead us to labor unselfishly for the welfare of the world, our country, and fellow-Christians. 3. *Faithfulness to God.* These tribes had "kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord their God." We have a charge from God to keep. Even our duties to men should be discharged with a supreme regard to the will of God (Col. 3:22), and our religious devotion should guide and inspire us in human duties.—*W. F. Adeney.*

III. The Parting Exhortation.—Vers. 5, 6. **THE DANGER.** The two and a half tribes would (1) be isolated from their brethren, and there "was danger lest the separation should injure their fidelity to God. The influence of Christian example and the sym-

5. But ¹take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged^h you ²to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

6. So Joshua ³blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents.

7. Now to the *one* half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given *possession*ⁱ in Bashan: ⁴but unto the *other* half thereof^k gave Joshua among their brethren on^l this side Jordan westward. And^m when Joshua sent them away alsoⁿ unto their tents, then^o he blessed them,

8. And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches^p unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment; ^qdivide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.

9. And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan, to go unto ^rthe country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word^r of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

Rev. Ver.: *h.* commanded you; *i.* inheritance; *k.* omit thereof; *l.* beyond Jordan; *m.* moreover; *n.* omit also; *o.* omit then; *p.* wealth; *q.* commandment. ¹ Deut. 6: 6, 17; 11: 22. ² Deut. 10: 12. ³ Gen. 47: 7. Ex. 39: 43. Josh. 14: 13. ⁴ 2 Sam. 6: 18. Luke 24: 50. ⁵ Josh. 17: 5. ⁶ Num. 31: 27. 1 Sam. 30: 24. ⁷ Num. 32: 1, 26, 29.

pathy of the church are great aids to devotion. When these are lost, special care is needed to prevent devotion from growing cold. This applies (*a*) to those who go from their homes to business occupations which separate them from old religious associations, (*b*) to those who leave their country for travel and recreation. (2) They would dwell amid evil surroundings. Heathen associates, bad examples, temptations, would be on every side, and tend to mar their religious character and life, as Lot was injured by living in Sodom. (3) They would be at a distance from religious ordinances, from the services of the tabernacle, and could with difficulty attend even the great feasts. It is a great misfortune and full of danger to live far away from the means of grace.

5. **Take diligent heed:** because of these dangers. The expressions are remarkably varied and accumulated, to show in the most forcible manner the unspeakable importance to every child of man of a life of devoted obedience. — *Bush.* **To do the commandment and the law.** They must not fail in outward obedience, imagining that the love of the heart was enough. He that ceases to keep the commandments will soon find that his spiritual life and character have degenerated. **Which Moses . . . charged you** (see Deut. chaps. 26-28) **to love the Lord your God.** This is the centre and soul of true religion, the foundation of all true obedience, the source of all true life. **To cleave unto him;** keeping close to God, and letting nothing come between to separate them. Nothing could harm them, no temptation overcome them, while they were living close to God. **Serve him with all your heart.** No half-hearted service would avail. We see here how the great principles of true religion were taught and enforced in these early days, which Jesus set forth in clearer light.

6. **And they went unto their tents:** their homes.

THE WAY OF SUCCESS is clearly pointed out in Joshua's exhortation. For the individual and for the nation there is no other way. This way leads to every blessing both temporal and spiritual. See Moses' dying words to his nation in Deut. chaps. 27-29.

IV. **The Reward of Faithful Service.** — Vers. 7-9. 7. **Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh.** The writer explains how it came about that only half the tribe of Manasseh went back with the Reubenites and Gadites across Jordan. — *Cook.*

8. **Return with much riches.** Some idea of the amount of these riches can be obtained from the amount of spoil taken from the Midianites west of the Jordan, recorded in Num. 31: 26-54. These included 675,000 sheep, 72,000 beeves, and 61,000 asses. The Canaanites were rich, and their riches served to give the new nation a large and complete outfit.

NOTE that the wealth of the world will, in the end, belong to the kingdom of God, — not

by the destruction of worldly men, but by their conversion, destroying only their worldliness. All the inventions, the commerce, the new sources of comfort, the literature, the science, shall go to bless the kingdom of God, and promote its progress throughout the world. **Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren:** those who had fought in their turn, but were now at home, and with those who had remained at home caring for the families and the possessions of the absent soldiers. So it was with the spoil of the Midianites in Moses' time; half was given to the soldiers, and half to the congregation (Num. 31:27). So David divided the spoil four hundred years later (1 Sam. 30:21-25). "In like manner Polybius (10, 16:5) relates of Publius Scipio, that in the division of the spoil after the capture of Nova Carthago he divided it equally amongst all his troops, and that both the reserve and those who guarded the tents and the sick and those detached on any special service,—all had an equal share with those who were actually engaged."—Cook.

APPLICATIONS. 1. Those who deny themselves to support ministers and missionaries are entitled to a portion of the reward of their labors, and shall with those "who turn many unto righteousness," "shine with the brightness of the firmament and as the stars forever and ever." It is necessary that some should "abide by the stuff"; should carry on the business of the world, and do its work; and if they are devoted heart and soul to the Lord, and gather in order that they may sustain the soldiers of the cross in the field, both together shall sing the songs and wear the crowns of victory. 2. The same principle applies to those who have it in their hearts to enter the active service of the Lord, but are prevented by sickness or poverty.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Vers. 43-45. The Lord fulfils his every promise to the letter; not in one jot or tittle shall it fail.

2. God will give us a complete victory over sin in the soul. No sin, no temptation can stand before us if we trust in God and put on the divine armor.

3. Whatever failures our lives have known have come from our own neglect, and not from the failure of God to keep his promises.

4. Vers. 3, 4. It is our privilege and duty to help our brethren. Their cause is our cause.

5. Ver. 5. There is great danger in isolation from our Christian brethren, especially when we are surrounded by worldly influences and temptations. Individuals and churches need Christian fellowship.

6. The only safety is in loving God with all our hearts and keeping his commandments with all our soul. This is the only road to true success.

7. Ver. 8. True brotherly kindness and helpfulness enriches this life, both in material blessings and in better things than any temporal riches. That individual, that family, that nation, which treats all men as brothers, which extends a helping hand to every one in need, however poor or degraded, grows richer in possessions and in spiritual life. Every neglect to help, every repulse of others, takes from our own lives.

8. Those who earn and give the money to sustain preachers and missionaries shall have a part in their reward, as they have had a part in their work. God "takes the will for the deed."

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

A brief review and statement of time and place is all that is necessary for an introduction.

SUBJECT, — FAITHFULNESS.

I. GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO HIS WORD (vers. 43-45). Illustrated by his dealings with his chosen people. The promise delayed about 450 years since it was first made to Abraham, but fulfilled in due time.

Illustration. When the sceptical Frederick the Great asked his chaplain, in a sarcastic tone, to give in one word the evidences of the truth of the Christian religion, the chaplain answered, "Judaism"; and the king, we are told, was much struck with the justice and force of the answer. The token which God gave to Abraham was the starry sky; the token of his promises to us is the Jewish people. — *S. S. Times*.

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. 1 Thess. 5:24; Rom. 8:38, 39; Phil. 1:6; 2 Tim. 4:18; Jas. 1:17.

Illustration. The history of God's people is full of monuments of his promises. And when we see in our own past and all around us the Bunker Hills, the Gettysburgs and

Gibraltars of Faith's triumphs, we begin to say anew to our souls: "Why art thou cast down, oh! my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God." We are reminded, sometimes by our own unbelieving hearts, of the ancient philosopher in the heathen temple, gazing at the votive offerings which the sailors, saved from drowning, had hung there in gratitude to the goddess who had heard their prayers for rescue, saying: "Where are the memorials of the sailors that were drowned, praying in vain?" So we are asked: History is full of monuments to promises fulfilled; where are the monuments of those that have failed? You have books full of answers to prayers; where are the volumes that contain the prayers that are not answered? THERE ARE NONE. THERE ARE NONE. Because there never have been any failures in God's promises, and there are no prayers of faith that have not been answered.

II. FAITHFULNESS TO ONE ANOTHER (vers. 1-4). They kept their promises to *help* at great cost and through long years, spending much time and strength in *helping* their brethren. This *helped* to bind the twelve tribes into firm unity. So should churches and different denominations of Christians help one another.

Illustration. I remember once to have stood on the shore when the tide was out, in the great Bay of Fundy. It was anything but a sightly vision that swept away before my eyes, — little rivulets running here and there; pools, so to speak, cesspools, creeping and noisome things, and unsightly appearances on every side. By and by the sound came from the sea, and the tide came sweeping in, and all the little pools were obliterated, and all the rivulets, running this way and that way, merged themselves in the great movement of that mighty tide; and by and by the sun burst out over the whole; the shining of the splendor of God was on it, and the movement was immense, mighty, resistless, along the whole line of the coast. Brethren, when the tide is out in our closets, in our churches, in our seminaries, and elsewhere, there are noisome pools and cross rivulets and a thousand unsightly things; but when, under the call and touch of God, the tide is in, and the spirit is moving on our hearts, then, with mighty concord alike of east and west, north and south, there will be the surging toward the coming of the kingdom, and one heart and one mind will be ours; and as in that early day, it will be Pentecost again, and Pentecost to stay. — *E. P. Goodwin, D.D.*

Illustration. I expect to pass through this world but once; if, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect, for I shall not pass this way again. — *A Quaker's Motto.*

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. Phil. 2:4; Gal. 6:2; Luke 10:25-37.

III. FAITHFULNESS TO GOD (ver. 5). We see here the real heart of the ancient Jewish religion.

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. Luke 10:27, 28. Matt. 22:37, 38.

IV. REWARD OF FAITHFULNESS (vers. 6-9), together with the truth that those who aid at home have rewards with those who do the active work, as given in the *Explanatory*.

LESSON VIII. — NOVEMBER 25.

THE COVENANT RENEWED. — JOSH. 24: 19-28.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.* — JOSH. 24: 24.

TIME. — B.C. 1426. Eighteen years after the last lesson, and the twenty-fifth year of Joshua's rule over Israel: Josephus, Ant. V. 1: 29.

PLACE. — Shechem, between mounts Ebal and Gerizim, where the Israelites had renewed their covenant 25 years before on their first entrance into Canaan. The modern name of Shechem is Nablûs. It is a queer old place, and must be one of the oldest cities in the world. Its streets are narrow and dark, the houses overhanging them. The population consists of about 5,000 people, chiefly Mohammedans. There are, however, a few hundred Greek Christians, and a small number of Samaritans and Jews. The enmity between the two latter remains as inveterate as it was in the time of Christ.

THE CAPITAL was still at Shiloh.

JOSHUA. — Nearly 110 years old; living at Tîm'nâth-sē'râh, not far from Shechem.

PARALLELS.—The covenant on mounts Ebal and Gerizim 25 years before (Josh. 8 : 30-35; Deut. 27 : 1-10); the covenant at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19 : 1-25); the covenant in the plains of Moab (Deut. 29 : 1, including Deut. chaps. 27-30); Elijah at Carmel (1 Kings. 18 : 19-39).

INTRODUCTION.

In our last lesson we left the two and a half tribes on their way to their homes in Gilead, east of the Jordan. The parting exhortation of Joshua was still fresh in their minds, and as a means of their own devising to aid them in obeying it, they set up a great altar on the banks of the Jordan. The other tribes on learning this fact, and hastily inferring that the intention was to set up a separate place of sacrifice, in violation of God's command, prepared for war. But better counsels prevailed, and a delegation was sent to inquire into the facts. They returned with a satisfactory explanation, that the purpose was exactly opposite that with which they had been charged.

Nearly 18 years pass in peace and prosperity. Then we come to the last appeal of the aged chief, a part of which forms the subject of our lesson to-day.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Aged Chief.—The great war of conquest being ended, Joshua laid aside his office, and retired to a well-earned retreat at Timnath-serah, near Shechem, in his own tribe of Ephraim (19 : 50), exercising henceforth only a moral power, which was readily acknowledged. But his retirement was the beginning of a national decline. The constitution of Israel permitted no king or ruler, except in war, and the tribes naturally reverted more and more to a simple patriarchal government, which, though favorable to the development of popular liberty, tended to isolation and weakness, and made energetic and prompt action at any time difficult. The closing years of Joshua's life were thus like the waning of the moon, in which darkness grows ever deeper.—*Geikie*. Thus passed 18 years after the close of the conquest, or 25 years since he first assumed the leadership of the nation. He was now 110 years old (24 : 29), and bowed with the infirmities of many years (23 : 1).

II. The Great Assemblies.—Joshua had been watching the tendencies of the times, and knew well the character of his people, and the peculiar dangers to which they would be exposed. Therefore he determines to make, before he dies, one more appeal to them, under the most solemn circumstances possible. First he assembles the officers and leaders of all the tribes, makes an earnest appeal to them, with warnings and entreaties and promises, to serve and love God with all their hearts.

After this he gathered all the tribes, with their judges and officers, in one great assembly at Shechem, probably on the sloping sides of mounts Ebal and Gerizim, where they had gathered 25 years before, on their first entrance into the promised land, and made the most solemn promises to God. No circumstances could be more impressive, as amid these hallowed associations and memories the white-haired, beloved leader, touched with the light of a near eternity, arose and made his dying appeal.

III. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.—This was the central point of Joshua's appeal. He was anxious to have them take a decided, irreversible stand on God's side.—He did not imply that it was previously a matter of indifference whether they served God or no, or that they were really at liberty to refuse his service if they saw fit. He adopts this rhetorical mode of speech, in order to impress upon them more forcibly a sense of their duty, and the utter absurdity, as well as impiety, of devoting themselves to any other than the true God. It is a striking way of bringing the matter to an issue. His aim is to bring them to a decided stand; to a free, intelligent, firm, and lasting choice of God as their portion. In effecting this he makes use of a style of address which evidently implies that the service of idols compared with the service of God is so irrational, absurd, and brutish, that no man in the calm exercise of his understanding could hesitate which to choose.—*Bush*. Joshua pressed the people to decide at once. So still the Gospel demands that we decide at once (2 Cor. 6 : 2). There is no good reason for deferring the matter a single moment.—*Johnson*. Whatever motives would lead them to serve God at all, would lead them to do it immediately. To defer a duty is to refuse it.

THE CHOICE. The grand inference to be drawn from this mode of address is, that the service of God is a matter of voluntary choice, and that it is his will that we should all seriously and solemnly make this choice. He would have us weigh the matter well, compare the respective claims of his service and the service of sin and the world. As the evidences

19. And Joshua said unto the people, ¹Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he *is* a ²holy God; he *is* ³a jealous God; ⁴he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

¹ Matt. 6: 24. ² Lev. 19: 2. ³ 1 Sam. 6: 20. Ps. 99: 5, 9. Isa. 5: 16. ⁴ Ex. 20: 5. ⁵ Ex. 23: 21.

in favor of religion are so clear and indisputable, and its infinite advantages so obvious, the man who declines making the choice here enjoined must be considered as deliberately preferring Satan to Christ, death to life, hell to heaven. He who *acknowledges* the paramount claims of God and his Gospel, and yet does not *act* accordingly, does not sincerely and solemnly *choose* his service as that better part which cannot be taken from him, must stand self-condemned both here and hereafter. — *Bush*.

IV. Reasons why they should serve the Lord. — Vers. 19, 20. There was need that the reasons for serving God should be clearly and strongly presented; for there were many and strong temptations drawing the Israelites away from the true God. The surrounding nations were warlike, more cultured in worldly things, the worship of idols was showy, and attracted by every lust in the name of religion; their moral laws and restraints were much less strict than those of the Israelites.

FIRST REASON. *Gratitude* for all God's mercies in their past history (vers. 2-13). Everything they possessed was the gift of God. He had led them; he had helped them in marvellous ways; he had chosen them as his own peculiar people.

SECOND REASON. It was their *duty* to love and serve him who was their Creator, Redeemer, and Preserver.

THIRD REASON. God had proved himself to be the true God by his mighty works in their behalf. He had overthrown for them all false gods and their adherents. He had made them triumph over all opposition. No god is like the one true God.

FOURTH REASON. Joshua, after a lifetime spent in his service, was confirmed in his choice of the service of God. His whole *example and experience* were on God's side (ver. 15). "This declaration of their venerated leader, while devoid of the least air of dictation, was in fact the most powerful argument he could have used to influence their minds in the direction he wished. For the force of example is in proportion to the depth of respect and estimation in which an individual is held; and he could not fail to perceive that the reverence with which he was regarded would give to his example a weight and authority almost amounting to absolute law." — *Henry*. "The service of God is nothing below the most distinguished of men. It is no diminution of their greatness, no disparagement of their rank, reputation, or honor, to be decidedly pious, and to be openly and avowedly so. On the contrary, it heightens every other distinction, and makes all honor still more honorable. Those that lead and rule in other things should be first in the service of God, and go before in every good work." — *Bush*.

FIFTH REASON. They had made a covenant with Jehovah that he should be their God, and they his people (ver. 18). They were bound to him by a solemn vow. To turn from him would be false and treasonable.

SIXTH REASON. The *judgment of God* would come upon them if they refused to serve him (vers. 19, 20).

19. Ye cannot serve the Lord, etc.: *i.e.*, ye cannot, in your own strength; it is more difficult than you imagine. — *J., F. and B.* It cannot be supposed for a moment that Joshua intended to deter the people from the service of God by representing it as impracticable or dangerous. On the contrary, his design is to enlist them more sincerely and steadfastly in it. Finding them now animated by a glowing *zeal*, forward and abundant in their professions, and unconsciously prone to trust to their own strength, Joshua, in these words, designs to administer a wholesome check to their ardor, by setting impressively before them the holy and sin-avenging character of the God with whom they had to do, and the fearful consequences of disobedience and apostasy. Thus they would be more cautious, circumspect, and humble in their professions, and go forward in their walk with more awe upon their spirits and a more trembling sense of their dependence on a higher power than their own. This Joshua well knew was the only frame of mind which could be trusted to for permanent and happy results. In like manner, it deserves very serious deliberation whether there is not danger of representing the sincere service of God as a matter of very little difficulty, provided only there be evidence of a *present vigorous resolution*, and whether it be not better in such cases wisely to repress, chasten, and even dampen the warmth of present zeal by considerations like those which Joshua now pressed upon the children of Israel. The same

20. ¹If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, ²then he will turn, and do you hurt,^a and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

21. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.

22. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye *are* witnesses against yourselves that ³ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, *We are* witnesses.

23. Now therefore ⁴put away, *said he*, the strange gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God^b of Israel.

Rev. Ver.: a. evil; b. the God. ¹ 1 Chron. 28: 9. ² 2 Chron. 15: 2. Ezra 8: 22. Isa. 1: 28. Jer. 17: 13.
² Isa. 63: 10. ³ Ps. 119: 173. ⁴ Gen. 35: 2. Judg. 10: 16. 1 Sam. 7: 3.

infallible authority which assures us that the yoke of Christ is easy and his burden light, assures us also that the gate is strait and the way narrow that leads to life, and that there is need of *striving* as well as seeking to enter in. — *Bush*. Decisions which are to affect the eternal destiny of the soul should be made at once, but soberly, and with the fullest knowledge. — *Johnson*. **A holy God:** pure, right, just, loving, with no evil in his nature, and hence opposed to all evil everywhere. **God.** The plural *Elohim*, here used, “directs attention to the infinite riches and infinite fulness contained in the one Divine Being, and therefore to the fact that, if we were to believe in innumerable gods, and endow them with perfection, they would still all be contained in the one *Elohim*.” — *Hengstenberg*. **He is a jealous God.** God is represented frequently in the Old Testament as married to his people, and he has the same sensitiveness to any rivalry, any turning away of the love, or desires, or duty from him, that a husband has for any alienation on the part of his wife. **He will not forgive your transgressions:** rather, will not pass by, as if taking no notice. Joshua is supposing their wilful rebellion and forsaking of God. — *Gray*. He will not tolerate your transgressions. He will punish them, and take every means to save you from them. It will not be possible, under God’s rule, to prosper while continuing in sin.

20. **If ye forsake the Lord.** This verse is an explanation and application of what had just been said in the previous verse. **Then he will turn, and do you hurt.** His attitude toward them would be changed, not because God had changed, but because they had changed. God is invariably full of loving-kindness and tender mercy; but for this very reason he is invariably a consuming fire to those who continue in sin. The same unchanging sun is in the east or in the west, is cheering or consuming, according to our relations to it; brings malaria from the marshes, or gives color and flavor to fruits, according to what it shines upon.

V. **The Covenant Renewed.** — Vers. 21-25. 21. **Nay; but we will serve the Lord.** The people assert that Joshua need not picture the danger of forsaking God, for their mind was made up: they were fully determined to cleave to the true God.

22. **Ye are witnesses against yourselves:** your public promise to obey will be a witness that you know your duty, and accepted the conditions of blessings for obedience, and punishment for disobedience. This witness will warn you if you are tempted to go astray, and will justify God’s dealings with you, if, forsaking God, you suffer the bitter punishment.

WITNESSING AGAINST OURSELVES. It is still true of men that they are witnesses against themselves, as to their duty toward God now; and they will be all the witnesses needed in the day of judgment. 1. Every sinner’s conscience is a witness against his course. 2. The principles on which business men must act as the condition of worldly success will witness against those who refuse to apply like principles to religion, — principles which, if lived out, would lead them to be Christians. 3. The fault-findings of men against good people show that these fault-finders know what is right, and are to blame if they do not live up to it. 4. The principles on which good government in this world is based will justify God’s moral dealings with men. 5. The obedience which parents require of their children, the gratitude acknowledged to be due for favors received, the honor demanded for those to whom honor is due, will all witness to the justice of God’s demand for our obedient and loving service. 6. Our professions of religion are an abiding witness against us, if we forsake God. — *P*.

23. **Now therefore put away . . . the strange gods which are among you.** The words import that there really were amongst the people, even in Joshua’s days, those who were idolaters in secret. — *Cook*. Teraphim and other images were, if not worshipped, yet preserved among them in such a way as to be likely to lead them into temptation. The history of Micah in Judg. 17: 5 is a proof of this. — *Pulpit Com*. Had they ever served any

24. And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and^c his voice will we obey.

25. So Joshua¹ made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

26. And Joshua² wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took³ a great stone, and set it up there⁴ under an^d oak, that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD.

Rev. Ver.: *c.* and unto his voice will we hearken; *d.* the oak. ¹ See Ex. 15: 25. ² Kings 11: 17. ³ Deut. 31: 24. ⁴ See Judg. 9: 6. ⁵ Gen. 35: 4.

other gods? When Joshua was a young man, he went part of the way on a mountain with Moses, when God gave two tables of stone. As Moses came down from the mountain, he heard singing and shouting. While the leader had been listening to God, the people had all been worshipping an idol. Perhaps some of the people had kept hidden away some little images, such as their great-grandfathers once worshipped. Even the family of Jacob, from whom all Israel was named, had such idol gods: and Jacob took them away, and hid them under an oak which was by Shechem, the very place where Joshua had this last talk, near the mountains of blessing and of cursing.—*Faith Latimer*. **And incline your heart unto the Lord God:** for if they gave God their hearts, they could not worship idols; and all acts of worship, even of the Lord, were in vain, unless they proceeded from a heart of love. The supreme love of God was the fountain from which all morality and all their prosperity and success would flow.

24. And the people said unto Joshua: for the third time (vers. 16, 21, 24). The triple repetition of the promise adds to the solemnity of the occasion and the binding force of the engagement.—*Pulpit Com.*

25. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day: *i.e.*, he solemnly ratified and renewed the covenant of Sinai (Ex. 19: 20), as Moses had done before him in the plains of Moab (Deut. 29: 1).—*Cook*. At Sinai the covenant was solemnly ratified with (1) burnt offerings and peace offerings at the foot of the mount; (2) the reading of every word of the law in the ears of the people; (3) the sprinkling of one-half of the blood of the victims on the altars and the roll containing the covenant conditions, and the other half on the people (Ex. 24: 3-8; Heb. 9: 19, 20). This covenant Moses had renewed in "the field" of Moab (Deut. 29: 1). Joshua, who had been present at the ratification of both the previous covenants, renews it now, and doubtless with august ceremonial.—*Cambridge Bible*. **Set them a statute:** either he formed the whole into a statute and ordinance which was promulgated for all Israel to receive and obey, or it may mean that he declared or propounded to them, he set before them, the sum and substance of the Mosaic statutes, which their covenant obliged them to observe.—*Bush*.

VI. **The Memorial of the Covenant.**—Vers. 26-28. 26. And Joshua wrote these words. As Moses at Sinai wrote all the words that Jehovah had spoken in a book, probably a papyrus roll (Ex. 24: 4), so Joshua now inscribed "minutes" of the transactions connected with this renewal of the covenant at Shechem.—*Cambridge Bible*. **In the book of the law:** he wrote a document, a protocol, so to speak. This protocol he placed inside the roll of the law of Moses.—*Cambridge Bible*.

NOTE that this is the second signature among the sacred writers of the Old Testament. The *first* is that of Moses, in Deut. 31: 9,—"Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests," etc. The *second* is this of Joshua's. The *third* is that of Samuel (1 Sam. 10: 25),—"Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in the [not a] book, and laid it up before the Lord." We have here a clue to the authorship of the Old Testament, and to the view of the writers who succeeded Moses in what they did. They did not look upon themselves as writers of distinct books, but as authorized to add their part to the book already written, to write what was assigned to them "in the book of the law of God." The *unity* of Holy Scripture is thus seen to have been an essential feature of the Bible from the very first.—*Ellicott*. **And took a great stone:** like Jacob's pillar at Bethel (Gen. 28: 18), or the twelve pillars at Sinai (Ex. 24: 4), or the memorial stones at Gilgal (Josh. 4: 3). **And set it up there under an oak:** rather, "the oak," or "grove of oaks"; *viz.*, that mentioned in Gen. 12: 6.—*Cook*. It is called Abraham's oak. The "plain of Moreh" in that passage should be the "oak of Moreh." **That was by the sanctuary:** either the spot made sacred by this oak and altar of Abraham, or by Jacob's altar, perhaps still remaining; or the spot where the ark had stood. They were all probably on one spot.

27. And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be ¹a witness unto ²us; for it ²hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto ²you, lest ye deny your God.

28. ³So Joshua let ⁴the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.

Rev. Ver.: *e.* against; *g.* sent the people away.

¹ See Gen. 31: 48, 52. Deut. 31: 19, 21, 26. Judg.

22: 27, 28, 34. ² Deut. 32: 1. ³ Judg. 2: 6.

27. **This stone shall be a witness unto us:** it would ever remain as a token of their covenant. **For it hath heard.** A striking figure of speech. The words were spoken in its presence, and were so joined to this transaction that every sight of the pillar would remind them of their obligations and promises. How awfully solemn must have been the assemblage and the occasion! The eye and the ear of the people being both addressed, it was calculated to leave an indelible impression; and, with spirits elevated by their brilliant victories in the land of promise, memory would often revert to the striking scene on mounts Ebal and Gerizim and in the vale of Sychar.—*J., F. and B.*

OUR MEMORIAL. The Lord's Supper is the memorial of our covenant with God, and ever testifies to the promises we have made to God, as well as his covenant of love toward us. The church where we have witnessed to Christ, the Bible we have been accustomed to read, the holy associations of religion, are all witnesses to our covenant promises.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

The *Commentaries* on Joshua 8: 30-35; Thornley Smith's *Joshua and his Times*; Miss Smiley's *Fullness of Blessing*, p. 313 ff.; Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*. *Sermons* on verse 15, the central point of the lesson, by Bellamy, J. Howe, T. C. Hare, Nevins, Tillotson, W. J. Armstrong. *Sermons* on verse 22, by S. Davies and T. J. Frelinghuysen. An effective illustration of parting advice is found in Mrs. Sewall's *Ballads*, "Mother's Last Words."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Every person must decide for himself whether he will serve God or not. We must serve God from free choice, or not at all.

2. But we should examine carefully the reasons for the course we choose.

3. All reasons are on the side of serving God.

4. We should throw the weight of our personal influence and example on the side of God.

5. The service of God is worthy of the most distinguished men. Those that lead in other things should lead in God's service.

6. We should make our decision now,—"to-day, if ye will hear his voice." For (1) you are not too young. (2) You should not wait for your feelings to change. (3) You should not wait till you are better, but come that you may be better. (4) You should not wait for others. (5) You should not wait for opposition to cease.—*Johnson.*

7. God's goodness, his power, his preserving care, his providences in our past lives, his hatred of sin, should combine to lead us to choose God's service.

8. Vers. 19, 20. We cannot expect to forsake God and live in sin without suffering the consequent punishment.

9. Ver. 22. We are witnesses against ourselves. The mercies each one has received, his conscience, his profession, his principles as to worldly things, his dealings with others, all are witnesses against him, if he refuses to serve God.

10. Ver. 23. We should put away everything that would usurp the place of God in our hearts, even though we have to cut off a right hand or pluck out a right eye.

11. Vers. 24, 25. There is a great advantage in placing people where they must take a decisive stand on one side or the other.

12. There is strength and help in a public profession of our religion, in making a solemn covenant to serve and love God.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The scene which is described in this lesson is one of the most interesting scenes in all the history of this period. The aged leader, the assembled people, the loving, earnest entreaty, the enthusiasm evoked,—these are elements of a most attractive picture. With ordinary pains, the teacher can scarcely fail to make the lesson an interesting one.—*Watson.*

The time; the place; Joshua; the circumstances of the times.

SUBJECT, — DECIDING FOR GOD.

I. THE DUTY OF DECIDING FOR GOD. The two assemblies. The power of the last words of one who stands on the dividing ridge, and looks back over a long past, and forward into the unending future.

THE SCENE in the valley of Shechem, and on the slopes of Ebal and Gerizim on either side. The historical associations make this a peculiarly fitting place for this assembly. Imagine the aged and beloved leader, crowned with honors, and saintly in character, standing where all the assembled multitudes can see and hear him. For in this place a "single voice might be heard by many thousands, shut in and conveyed up and down by the enclosing hills. In the early morning we could not only see from Gerizim a man driving his ass down a path on Mount Ebal, *but could hear every word he uttered, as he urged it*; and in order to test the matter more certainly, on a subsequent occasion two of our party *stationed themselves on opposite sides of the valley*, and with perfect ease recited the commandments antiphonally." — *Tristram's Land of Israel*, pp. 149, 150.

The necessity of making some choice. (vers. 14, 15). The two parties, God and the world.

Illustration. We have in the old histories read of one of the ribald kings of England (Redwall), who had a shield upon which was engraved a figure representing God, and another representing Satan right alongside; and underneath these he had scrawled with his own hand the motto, in bold letters, "Ready for either; catch me who can." This is speaking more frankly than most; but it says what many say by their irresolute action. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." — *C. S. Robinson*.

Illustration. It was resolution made Anaxarchus, when his bones were crushed, make sport with his torments, and cry out, "Break, break the carcass of Anaxarchus, but his mind you shall never break." It was resolution made Regulus fling himself into the merciless arms of his enemies, and suffer himself to be stung and pricked to death. It was resolution made Attalus sit down cheerfully in the fiery chair his persecutors had prepared for him, and say, "It's not we that do eat children, but it's you that devour innocent Christians." — *A. Horneck*.

Illustration. There is a tradition that the apostle John, in his extreme old age, when all capacity to teach or to work was gone, used to repeat everywhere, to all with whom he came in contact, the command which summed up all his Master's will, "Little children, love one another."

EXAMPLES. The solemn assembly in this same valley 25 years before (Josh. 8: 30-35; Deut. 27: 1-10), and the assembly on Carmel under the leadership of Elijah, 500 years later (1 Kings 18: 19-39).

II. REASONS FOR DECIDING FOR GOD. Vers. 19, 20, including also all the previous verses of the chapter.

APPLICATION to our own times, and the reasons each one of us has for choosing God.

TIME, NOW. EXAMPLE, Joshua's, in ver. 15.

III. THE DECISION MADE (vers. 21-28). The decision three times repeated; witness against themselves; the witness of the memorial stone.

APPLICATIONS. How we are witnesses against ourselves (a very strong point for older classes). The value to us of public professions and the Lord's Supper, which perpetually witness to our vows.

IV. NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. Jesus bids us make a like choice (Matt. 6: 33; Rev. 3: 20; 22: 17); we must decide one way or the other (Matt. 6: 24); reasons for choosing God (Matt. 11: 28-30; Rom. 2: 4; 12: 1; 1 Cor. 1: 25; John 3: 16; Matt. 25: 46).

LESSON IX. — DECEMBER 2.

ISRAEL UNDER JUDGES. — JUDG. 2: 11-23.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* — *HEB. 3: 12.*

TIME. — Joshua died about B.C. 1426. The rest of the lesson is a general description of the whole period of the Judges, which extended 330 years, from the death of Joshua, B.C. 1426, to the inauguration of Saul as king of Israel, B.C. 1095.

PLACE. — Joshua died at Timnath-serah, a few miles south of Shechem. The religious capital was Shiloh, between Bethel and Shechem.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES. — 1. *Its name* is derived from the fact that it is a record of the doings of the Judges.

2. *Its author*, according to Jewish tradition, was Samuel, but it cannot be determined with absolute certainty; but without much doubt, it was written during his time, and probably by him, or under his supervision.

3. *Its date.* It was probably written during the reign of Saul, or the first seven years of David's reign, B.C. 1075-1048.

4. *Its time.* The period covered by the Book of Judges extends over about 280 years, from Joshua's death, B.C. 1426, to the birth of Samuel, B.C. 1146.

5. *Its character.* "That the writer of the Book of Judges does not follow the order of time, but groups his incidents so as to show the course of the history of Jehovah's redemption of his people in spite of their follies, is plain to the most superficial student. It is a picture of the times and events under the old covenant. The Orientals are not alone in this manner of composition, for we do the same thing in our most careful histories." — *Prof. Isaac Hall*, in *S. S. Times*. The transition from Joshua to Judges is like the descent from the mountain to the city at its foot, or like the change from the music of a symphony to the noise of the street. The book is a picture of popular life, — life in its ordinary struggles. — *Pres. L. Clark Seelye*.

INTRODUCTION.

This lesson gives, as it were, a bird's-eye view of the whole period of the Judges, the details of which are given in the following chapters. The whole period under the Judges may easily be mistaken, by a superficial observer, for an unbroken series of idolatries and crimes, from his not observing that the lapses which incurred punishment and the divine deliverances which attended repentance are related so fully as to occupy the whole narrative; while periods when, under the government of the Judges, the people followed God and the land enjoyed rest, are passed over in a single verse as productive of no event which required particular detail. — *Dr. Graves*. The periods of peace and prosperity were really much longer than the periods of war and captivity: —

"The times of quiet and unbroken peace,
Though for a nation times of blessedness,
Give back faint echoes from the historian's page."

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Circumstances under which the Israelites were placed. — **FIRST, GOVERNMENT.** The government was a theocracy; *i.e.*, God himself was the chief ruler, and there was no visible central supreme power, either in king, president, or congress; a most excellent plan if the people all remained good. Each tribe was independent. The people were divided into hereditary clans, something like the clans of the Scotch Highlanders. Each village was complete and independent. The laws were the laws given them through Moses, and no new ones were made. The priests were the ultimate appeal in cases of dispute. The high-priest was a kind of prime minister of God. There was no standing army, and no provision was made for war. Professional soldiers did not exist.

SECOND, RELIGION AND EDUCATION. There was a central place of religious worship at Shiloh, for the whole nation. Here were the tabernacle, the ark, the altar for daily sacrifices; and hence at this place the tribes were to assemble three times a year for the great feasts. The Levites were intended to be scattered through the nation, as its religious teachers. We know that in Samuel's times there were schools of the prophets in various places. The religious institutions bound the people together into one nation; and the Mosaic laws separated them from all other nations, thus intensifying the national idea.

THIRD. In seeking to understand the history of Israel under the Judges, we must bear in mind that only 67 years before the death of Joshua they had been slaves in Egypt, and that a mixed multitude of Egyptian descent had come up with them into Canaan. The effects of Egypt are plainly seen.

FOURTH. There seems to have been a great neglect of family training and family religion; for after the death of Joshua and his generation there "arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (Judg. 2: 10). If the former generation had obeyed God's command to teach their children what

11. And the children of Israel did^a evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim.^b

Rev. Ver.: *a.* did that which was evil: *b.* the Baalim.

God had done for them and said to them, no such state of things could have arisen as is described in the Book of Judges.

FIFTH. The Canaanites, though conquered, were only partially subdued. Their armies had been defeated in battle, pursued, scattered, broken, and most of their strong cities captured, and more or less thoroughly destroyed; yet still they remained in very considerable force in the country, holding some of their strong points in defence. It is easy to conceive "some idea of the wretchedness and misery which would necessarily result from the continual upheaving of the conquered population, and the liability to incursions from insurgents as they gathered strength." Then, too, the city life and culture, pride and wealth of the Canaanites would have a peculiar fascination to many of the rural population of Israel, and tend to lead them astray.

SIXTH. THE FASCINATIONS OF IDOLATRY seem to have presented great attractions to many of the Israelites. 1. Idols presented a visible, tangible representation of God, with a splendid and sensual ceremonial; while Jehovah, the true God, was unseen. 2. Idolatry presented the temptation of novelty, of fashion and worldliness. 3. The sports and revels connected with idolatrous worship appealed to every passion, and were specially tempting to the Israelites because their worship was purity itself, while they themselves hankered after forbidden pleasures. In the revels of idolaters there was no restraint, no confession of sin, no costly sacrifices except to passion; but they could serve every evil in the name and under the sanction of their gods.

II. **The Israelites fall into Idolatry.** — Vers. 11-13. 11. **And the children of Israel did evil.** Under the circumstances described above, the Israelites failed to resist temptation, and fell into idolatry. They first forgot God (ver. 10), and then evil actions naturally followed. — Practical infidelity follows swiftly upon the heels of speculative infidelity. Decay of morals inevitably follows decay of faith. A curious proof of this fact is imbedded in almost every language, in those words whose primary signification implies unbelief, and whose secondary meaning is expressive of practical wickedness. For example, *miscreant* first signified a *misbeliever*, then a *vile wretch*; the word *unprincipled* first had reference to *speculative religious opinions*, then passed over into its more common signification of *profligate and vicious*. — *D. Steele, D.D.* In the sight of the Lord: evil that the Lord had forbidden; evil that was abhorrent to his holy nature; and evil in his sight, in the presence of his mighty works, and his positive commands. "Did evil in the sight of the Lord" is the usual phrase for falling into idolatry. **And served:** the true religion is a service of love and reverence; but all false religion is a service of superstition and terror. The impenitent often think that by refraining from being Christians they escape service; while, on the contrary, they serve Satan, who is a cruel master and whose wages are death. — *Johnson.* **Baalim:** Baalim is the plural of *Baal*, a Semitic word, signifying owner, lord, or master, and in the highest sense denoting the deity. With the article prefixed, it designates the Baal or chief deity of the Phœnicians. It is the same as the Babylonian Bel. Strictly, Baal meant the highest male god (the sun or planet Jupiter), as Ashtoreth or Astarte did the highest goddess (the moon or Venus). — *American Cyclopædia.* The plural *Baalim* is used (1) either because of the multitude of idols and images of Baal; or better, (2) it refers to the different offices and attributes of the god. This latter conjecture receives the general consent of scholars. Thus: Baal-zebul, Baal in the office of protector from flies, one of the worst plagues of warm climates; Baal-peor, Baal presiding over licentious rites of worship. — *Johnson.* (3) It is an intensive plural, great lord, or supreme lord, like Elohim, the Hebrew word for God, which is in the plural. — *Prof. C. A. Briggs.*

THE CONTRAST. 1. Baal was the god of absolute sovereignty, exciting terror in his worshippers on the one side, and on the other, through Ashera, bestowing pleasures of sense. Jehovah was the living personal God, entering into communion with his people in tender relationships, such as sonship and marriage.

2. Baal was worshipped in the use of images of wood, stone, bronze, silver, and gold, and pillars of stone. These images and pillars were set up alongside of altars as places of sacrifice, upon high places, either on hills or artificial mounds, towers or roofs of palaces, and sometimes in temples. Baal was worshipped by kissing his images (1 Kings 19:18), enthusiastic dances, cutting of the person, and other ecstatic rites (1 Kings 18:26-28), by

12. And they ¹forsook the LORD God^c of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed ²other gods, of the gods of the people^d that *were* round about them, and ³bowed themselves^e unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.

13. And they forsook the LORD, ⁴and served Baal and Ashtaroth.^g

Rev. Ver.: c. the God; d. peoples; e. down unto; g. the Ashtaroth. ¹ Deut. 31: 16. ² Deut. 6: 14.
³ Ex. 20: 5. ⁴ Ps. 106: 36.

incense and sacrifices, but the choicest sacrifice was an only son. The favorite form of sacrifice to his consort Ashtaroth was prostitution.

Jehovah was worshipped without images, an unseen but infinite eternal God. He was worshipped by sacrifices every part of which was full of spiritual meaning, showing the people the awful evil of sin, teaching holiness, purity, consecration, communion with God, brotherly love. — Condensed from *Prof. C. A. Briggs*, in *S. S. Times*.

12. And they forsook the Lord: probably not all, but enough to represent the nation. The grand success of the reformation achieved by Samuel, and such glimpses of Hebrew life as are given in the Book of Ruth, seem to imply that, as a whole, there was always a latent religious life in the mass of the people, needing only to be roused and purified. — *Geikie*. Which brought them out of the land of Egypt: who had done such wonders for them; to whom they owed their very existence as a nation. This is stated to show the ingratitude, the folly, and the treason the Israelites committed in forsaking God. Bowed themselves unto them: "publicly worshipped." Provoked: did that which moved God to punish them. To anger: not passion, but to indignation and punishment on account of their sins.

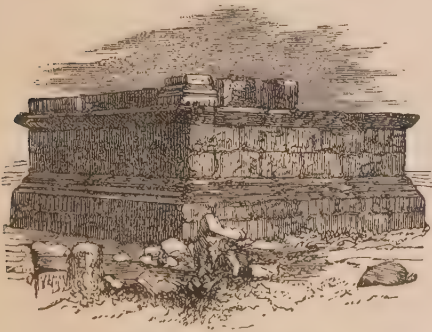
13. Ashtaroth: the plural of Ashtoreth, as Baalim of Baal, and probably for the same reasons. Ashtaroth, "most happy, or fortunate, the supreme source of happiness," was the female deity corresponding to Baal, the moon or the planet Venus, as Baal was the sun. "This female deity combines the attributes of the classic Juno, Venus, and Minerva." — *Briggs*.



ASHTORETH.

"With these in troop
 Came Ashtoreth, whom the Phœnicians call'd
 Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns,
 To whose bright image nightly by the moon
 Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs." — *Milton's Par. Lost*, 1: 439.

APPLICATIONS. Like the forsaking of God by these Israelites, our departures from God show *ingratitude* for his mercies as innumerable and as bright as the stars; *foolishness*, to make an enemy of the greatest Being in the universe, who holds all forces under his control; *treason*, to rebel against our true king. The Israelites fell before the difficulties and temptations, by the overcoming of which they might have walked as kings and princes, the leading nation of the earth. So the very difficulties which God puts in our way to develop our character, to stimulate our courage, to enlarge our being, — which mean higher thrones, brighter crowns, sweeter harps, — are transformed by us into excuses for sin. We stumble over the very steps God has given us by which to climb to glory.



TEMPLE OF ASHTORETH.

14. ¹And the anger of the LORD was^k hot against Israel, and he ²delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he ³sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they ⁴could not any longer stand before their enemies.

15. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said,ⁱ and ⁵as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly^k distressed.

16. Nevertheless the ⁶LORD raised up judges, which delivered^l them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

Rev. Ver.: *k*. was kindled; *i*. spoken; *k*. sore; *l*. saved. ¹ Judg. 3: 8. Ps. 106: 40-42. ² 2 Kings 17: 20. ³ Judg. 3: 8; 4: 2. Ps. 44: 12. Isa. 50: 1. ⁴ Lev. 26: 37. Josh. 7: 12, 13. ⁵ Lev. 26. Deut. 28. ⁶ Judg. 3: 9, 10, 15. 1 Sam. 12: 11. Acts 13: 20.

III. The Consequences of their Fall.—Vers. 14, 15. **FIRST.** 14. **And the anger of the Lord was hot.** The Lord's indignation at their sins was intense, like a burning fire. He could not love righteousness and not be indignant at sin. He could not love the people and desire to make them pure and holy, without at the same time being hotly incensed at their disobedience, at their trampling under their feet like swine the pearls of righteousness. The more intense the love, the more intense also the indignation. If the feelings against sin do not flame and burn, then the love also is a feeble thing.

SECOND. **He delivered them:** for punishment. Their enemies were only the instruments in the hands of God. From whatever source the punishment of sin comes, it is from God. **Into the hands of spoilers:** those who took the spoils of war; also robbers, plundering bands. Ancient warfare was always attended by the greatest cruelties; it was always predatory; the property of the people was taken away, and the people themselves carried in bonds as slaves. Modern warfare is sufficiently horrible; but the ancient was tenfold more horrible.—*Johnson.* **He sold them.** As the judge was used to sell the criminal, or the creditor the debtor, for a slave, that the injured party might be reimbursed by their price, so the Lord recovered, as it were, that glory, by punishing Israel, of which they had robbed him by their sins, and he made the Canaanites the instruments of his righteous indignation.—*Scott.* **They could not any longer stand:** in battle. The previous successes of Israel had been gained only by the favor of God; and when that favor was withdrawn, the nation was utterly weak. We are not told the immediate occasions of their inefficiency; but we can have no doubt that there were tribal divisions and jealousies, a spirit of insubordination (ver. 17), and that decadence of heroic patriotism which ever attends a general decadence of religion.—*Johnson.* Sin and punishment are inseparable. Sometimes the punishment is a judgment from without, sometimes the natural outgrowth of sin within. In the case of Israel, both. From the root of idolatry grew up licentiousness, pride, etc., and ultimately God permitted invasion and conquest by idolatrous powers. The people were filled with the fruit of their own ways.—*Class and Desk.*

THIRD. 15. **The hand of the Lord was against them:** his power and influence. The Almighty God was against them. Their only Hope was changed into an enemy. God could not bless a disobedient people, for that would be to encourage disobedience. "The atheistic saying of Napoleon, that God always favors the strongest battalions, is contradicted by all history. He succeeds who has God for an ally."—*Johnson.* **As the Lord had said.** Particular reference is had to Lev. 26: 15-17 and Deut. 28: 25, where these very judgments are expressly denounced against them in case they should thus apostatize.—*Bush.* God is as true to his threats as to his promises.—*Starke.*

FOURTH. The heathen nations were left to be a trial and a trouble to Israel; a perpetual thorn in the flesh. See on vers. 20-23.

IV. What God did to save the People.—Vers. 16-19. **FIRST.** *All these sufferings were sent in love,* to lead the people to righteousness (Deut. 8: 2; Zech. 13: 9).

SECOND. *God raised up deliverers for them.* 16. **Nevertheless:** in spite of all the people's sins and rebellion, and although God sent the punishment. **The Lord raised up judges:** in various ways, by various means; sometimes by a direct call, sometimes by natural methods of his providence. But in all cases it was the Lord who did it. The term *Judges*, which occurs here for the first time, does not signify a mere judicial officer, whose functions are limited to the exposition and application of the law. It is used in a broad sense for a succession of executive officers who, by the inspiration of the spirit of God, com-

17. And yet they would^m not hearken unto their judges, butⁿ they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned^o quickly out of the way which^p their fathers walked in,^r obeying the commandments of the LORD; *but* they did not so.

18. And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the ¹LORD was with the judge, and delivered^s them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: ²for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.

19. And^t it came to pass,^u when the judge was dead, *that* they returned,^v and corrupted *themselves* more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own^w doings, nor from their stubborn way.

20. And^x the anger of the LORD was^y hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people^z hath⁴ transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice;

Rev. Ver.: *m.* they hearkened not; *n.* for; *o.* turned aside; *p.* wherein; *r.* omit in; *s.* saved; *t.* but; *u.* turned back and dealt more corruptly; *v.* omit own; *w.* was kindled; *x.* nation. ¹ Josh. 1: 5. ² Gen. 6: 6. Deut. 32: 36. Ps. 106: 44, 45. ³ Judg. 3: 12; 4: 1; 8: 33. ⁴ Josh. 23: 16.

bined with great natural qualities, assumed the supreme control, unified the energies of a loose confederation of states, and aroused them to throw off the yoke of foreign oppression. — *Steele.* Jewish judges were more like Peter the Hermit and Jean d'Arc than like Roman dictators. — *Seelye.* The nation had no fixed capital, and the judge selected his own place of residence (Judg. 4: 5; 10: 1, 2). He was surrounded by but little splendor, having no royal court, in the proper sense of the term. — *Johnson.* They received no salary, imposed no tributes, made no laws, but merely exercised, for the deliverance of Israel, the personal ascendancy conferred upon them by "the Spirit of God." — *Ellicott.* There were fifteen judges in all. Eight were military heroes, five seem to have led more peaceful lives; while Eli the high-priest and Samuel the prophet stand apart with peculiar missions. **Out of the hand (the power) of those that spoiled them:** took their property as a spoil of war.

17. **Yet they would not hearken:** obey the exhortations and commands of their deliverers to serve God only. They were willing to be saved from the consequences of their sins, but not willing to leave the sins which brought the consequences, at least only for a time.

THIRD. God's long-suffering mercy. 18. **Then the Lord was with the judge:** as he was with Moses and Joshua. All their victories were from the Lord, so that the people might be persuaded to return to their only hope. The fact that the judges had been the means of delivering the people gave them a vantage-ground for urging the people to obedience. **For it repented the Lord.** He altered the course of his providence, as a man would do if he had repented. He changed his method out of pity and love. God leaned to the side of mercy, and continued to try again and again the effect of deliverance from the sufferings justly suffered by the people for their sins.

19. **They ceased not from their own doings:** the things which seemed pleasant to themselves and most conducive to happiness, although contrary to God's commands. **Nor from their stubborn way:** *their hard way.* Hard, as proceeding from a hard and perverse heart; hard, in the sense of being *stubbornly persisted in*; and hard or grievous in its consequences. It is the term applied to the obstinate and intractable conduct of Pharaoh.

APPLICATIONS. Goodness or love relatively to persistent sin is righteous punishment; relatively to penitent sorrow it is mercy and forgiveness. And the reason of this is plain. Sin involves the misery of all who are subject to it, and of all God's creation, if it is suffered to continued and grow in it. It must therefore be the part of a good and loving God to extirpate sin, and that doubtless is the purpose of punishment, which is only another way of saying that punishment is remedial, — remedial, if possible, to the being punished, that is, if it brings him to repentance; but anyhow remedial to creation, which, in the continued punishment of the impenitent, sees the evil of sin, and avoids it. We conclude then that while mercy is goodness acting towards those who are not beyond the reach of goodness, severity is goodness acting with a view as far as possible to the happiness of the whole creation. And we see in the atonement a provision of infinite wisdom, by which the risk of

21. I ¹also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died :

22. That ²through^y them I may ³prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.

23. Therefore^z the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily ; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.

Rev. Ver.: y. by; z. so. ¹ Josh. 23: 13. ² Judg. 3: 1, 4. ³ Deut. 8: 2, 16; 13: 3.

injury to the many by mercy to the few is removed and done away with. — *Bishop A. C. Hervey.*

God does everything that infinite love and wisdom and power can do to save the individual and the world.

V. **Why God did not drive out the Nations.** — Vers. 20-23. 22. That through them I may prove Israel. They would be scourges and instruments of wrath to punish and test the Israelites. In Ex. 23: 29, 30; Deut. 7: 22, an additional reason is given for the gradual extirpation of the Canaanites: "*lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.*" But God could have accomplished this end in other ways had the Israelites done their duty and driven out the Canaanites. But both objects were now accomplished at once.

A real growth was going on during this period of suffering and anarchy. "They learned by perpetual struggle to defend their new home, and the free exercise of their religion, and so they prepared for coming generations a sacred place where that religion and national culture might develop. During the long pause of apparent inaction, a hidden movement was going on, and the principles and truths so marvellously brought to light were taking firm root." — *Ewald.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

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PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. When the people fail in training and instructing their children in religion and righteousness, the effect will appear in the crimes and sufferings of their descendants.

2. Ver. 11. The World, Money, Pleasure, Self, are the Baals whom modern men worship.

3. Ver. 12. There is great danger in making intimate friendships with the world, its customs, and fashions.

4. "Vice is a monster of such hideous mien
That to be hated needs but to be seen.
But seen too oft, familiar with its face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace." — *Pope.*

5. The progress of the church of our risen Redeemer is hindered by nothing else so much as by these neglects of engagements and forgetfulness of promises and derelictions of duty, to which we give the name of covenant-breaking. — *C. S. Robinson.*

6. Vers. 12-15. When the good people depart from their integrity and comply with the sinful customs of the evil, they bring upon themselves not only the judgment of God, but also the contempt of those whom they seek to propitiate. — *Johnson.*

7. God hates sin with an infinite hatred and indignation.

8. The better the being, the hotter his anger at iniquity.

9. There can be no sin without evil consequences.

10. From whatever source the punishment comes, it is still from the hand of God. Even bad men may become God's instruments.

11. All our success in life depends on God's favor.

12. Vers. 16-19. God desires all men to be saved from their sins and troubles, and uses every means to help them.

13. As soon as any one is willing to repent and return to God, he is ready to welcome and forgive.

14. Vers. 20-23. Our sins themselves become the instruments of our punishment.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

"Out from the gentle calm of that period of sunset splendor when Joshua had reached his old age, and had calmed the warring peoples into peace, so that he might die tranquilly, we are now called to rush into the rough, stormy times of the Judges, as pictured by the hurried chapters of one of the bloodiest books in the Old Testament." Call for an account of the Book of Judges. Give as clear an idea as possible of the times, of the judges, the government, etc.

SUBJECT, — BACKSLIDING AND ITS FRUITS.

I. THE BACKSLIDING PEOPLE (vers. 11-13). The fact of backsliding. The temptations which attracted the people to idolatry. Baal and Ashtaroth. The effects of evil companionship; of worldly society and influences. Applications to modern idolatry.

Illustration. The church in the world has been compared to the gulf stream, — a warm stream flowing through a cold ocean; icebergs in it indeed, and itself not so warm as it should be, but far warmer than the chill waters through which it flows, and bringing a warm climate to American and European shores which would be almost barren and uninhabitable without it.

Illustration. The Scotch woman said that most of those found backsliding had not gone very far forward. The top that spins fast stands firm. When it goes slowly it falls easily.

II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF BACKSLIDING (vers. 14, 15). God's anger against sin.

Illustration. My record is as much a part of me as my hand is a part of me. It is as inseparable from me as my hand is inseparable from me. Ah! but you say the surgeon can take that arm off at the shoulder and remove that hand. He cannot. I sat by the side of a soldier who lost his arm in the last war, and the empty sleeve was dangling at his side, and all at once he said, "The fingers of this hand have been burning me all day." "How is that?" said I. Shaking his empty sleeve, he said, "It looks like I have got a hand; but though that arm lies on the battle-field of Virginia, it is here still. That hand is a part of me. It can never be separated from me." And my record can never be separated from me.

— *Anon.*

Illustration.

"With Repentance, his only companion, he lay,
And a dismal companion was he."

III. EFFORTS TO SAVE THE PEOPLE FROM THEIR SIN. God's long-suffering patience (Ezek. 18: 32; Ps. 78: 38; 86: 15). The judges. The object of punishment.

Illustration. There is an old Arabic tradition of the life of Adam after his sinful fall and his expulsion from Eden. "Driven from his abode of bliss and innocence, Adam fell upon the mountain in Ceylon which still retains his name." Bitterly penitent, with a godly sorrow, "Adam continued to deplore his guilt on the mountains of Ceylon for a period of a hundred years; and it is said that from the tears with which he moistened the earth, during this interval of remorse, there arose that useful variety of plants and herbs, which, in after-times, by their medicinal qualities, served to alleviate the afflictions of the human race; and to such a circumstance it is ascribed that the most useful drugs in the *materia medica* continue to this day to be supplied from the Peninsula of India and the adjoining islands." The Arabic tradition also tells of Adam's gladness when at length he came to a sense of forgiveness through God's grace. "The joy of Adam was now as intense as his previous sorrow had been extreme; and another century passed, during which the tears with which, from very opposite emotions, he now bedewed the earth, were not less effectual in producing every species of fragrant and aromatic flower and shrub, to delight the eye and gratify the sense, than formerly in the generation of medicinal plants to assuage the sufferings of humanity."

— *S. S. Times.*

IV. NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. Backsliding (Rev. 2: 4, 5). God's long-suffering love (2 Pet. 3: 9; Matt. 5: 45; John 3: 17). What God has done to lead us to repentance (Rom. 2: 4; John 3: 14-16). Afflictions to lead us to goodness and God (Heb. 12: 10, 11; 1 Pet. 1: 7; 2 Cor. 4: 17, 18).

LESSON X. — DECEMBER 9.

GIDEON'S ARMY. — JUDG. 7: 1-8.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.* — ZECH. 4: 6.

TIME. — About B.C. 1222. Two hundred years after our last lesson. Gideon's judgeship extended from B.C. 1222-1182.

PLACE. — Gideon's home was in Ophrah, near Shechem, in the territory of the half tribe of Manasseh, west of the Jordan. The gathering of his army was not far away, at the fountain of Harod, near the hill Moreh. It was at the foot of Mount Gilboa, some 15 or 20 miles southwest of the Sea of Galilee, and in the southern part of what in our Lord's time was called Galilee. It was near this place that Saul fought his last battle (1 Sam. 29: 1 and 31: 1).

GIDEON (*feller of trees*) was the son of Joash the Abiezrite (*i.e.*, descendant of Abiezer). He was born at Ophrah, in the tribe of Manasseh, about 1260 years before Christ. He was a man of highly noble person, and of a noble race, like the son of a king, "and whose brothers each one resembled the children of kings" (Judg. 8: 18). He was a man of strong common sense, a patriot, a true lover of God, cautious, modest, brave, and enthusiastic. The signs of the fleece (Judg. 6: 36-40), says Ewald, illustrate Gideon's own character; warm and zealous, while all around were indifferent and cold; calm and cool, when all around were excited. His first great works are given in the lesson below. He afterwards judged Israel for 40 years (Judg. 8: 28), and the nation enjoyed peace and prosperity under his rule, and worshipped the true God. He was one of the greatest of the Judges.

PRONUNCIATIONS. — Bā'rāk; Esdrā-ē'lōn; Gid'ēōn; Hā'rōd; Jērūb'bā'āl; Mō'rēh; Nāph'tālī; Oph'rāh.

INTERVENING EVENTS. —

1. The oppression of Chushan-Rishathaim, from Mesopotamia, on the Euphrates, during the last years of Joshua.... 8 years....B.C. 1435-1427.
2. *First judge*, Othniel, son-in-law of Caleb. Rest for40 years....B.C. 1427-1387.
3. Oppression by the Moabites from east of the Jordan.....18 years....B.C. 1387-1369.
4. *Second judge*, Ehud, delivers them. Rest for.....80 years....B.C. 1369-1289.
5. *Third judge*, Shamgar, who, by irregular acts like those of Samson, delivered the southwest tribes from the Philistines, during these same years.
6. Oppression by Jabin, king of Canaan, under his general, Sisera; with 900 chariots of iron.....20 years....B.C. 1289-1269.
7. Deliverance by Deborah, and Barak, the *fourth judge*.
Rest for40 years....B.C. 1269-1229.
8. Oppression by the Midianites7 years....B.C. 1229-1222.
9. Deliverance by the *fifth judge*, GideonB.C. 1222.
10. Rest under Gideon40 years....B.C. 1222-1182.

INTRODUCTION.

Two hundred years have passed since the death of Joshua. The larger part of this time was spent in peace and prosperity, but the Israelites were prone to fall into idolatry, and three times they had gone so far that the punishment spoken of in our last lesson had to be inflicted upon them, and for 45 years out of the 200 they had suffered from the oppressions of the neighboring nations. But the Lord sent judges who delivered them, and after each deliverance they served the Lord for many years. Thus after God, through Deborah and Barak, had saved the people from the oppression of the Lowlander Canaanites, they had a peaceful time of prosperity for 40 years, at the close of which period another enemy overran the country, the deliverance from whom is the subject of to-day's lesson.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Israel oppressed by the Midianites and Amalekites. — See Judg. 6: 1-6. The wild hordes of the desert, Midianites, Amalekites, and other nomadic tribes to the number of at least 135,000 (Judg. 8: 10), "streamed over the fords of the Jordan year by

year, migrating thither, with their households and herds, in such numbers as could only be compared, by those whom they invaded, to a flight of locusts; which, indeed, they rivalled in destructiveness." (See *Illustrations*.) The plains and valleys of Palestine had in all ages been the very "gates of Paradise" to these dwellers in the waste, as indeed they still are to their descendants. — *Geikie*. The threshed grain and the flocks and herds were carried away. "They swept over almost the whole land, pitched their tents, and fed their camels in the midst of the rich corn-fields of Israel. This was the most extensive and destructive servitude the nation had yet suffered. The people fled to mountain fastnesses, and hid themselves in caves. The land lay uncultivated, the cattle were destroyed, and a grievous famine ensued." — *Dean Milman*. All this continued for seven years (6:1). Of course there were endless fights and skirmishes with the Midianites, and in them Gideon's brothers had been slain (8:18).

APPLICATIONS. 1. So God's church during the ages has been exposed to many assaults from the world; sometimes the worldly spirit has overrun it; sometimes the hordes of false doctrines, of dead forms, of ungodly ease, have sought to plunder its treasures. 2. So "the holy land" of each soul, where God should be king, has often been overrun by wrong thoughts, ambitions, lusts of the flesh, hatred, indolence, selfishness. These devastate God's heritage.

II. **Gideon summoned to deliver his Country.** — Prophets had been sent to Israel urging its sons to return to Jehovah, as the only means of averting this calamity (6:7-10); but the land had been wasted for seven successive years before they listened to them, and penitently sought the one great Deliverer — often tried and never failing — the God of their fathers. Then, at last, the Ever Merciful raised a helper for them. — *Geikie*. An angel from the Lord came to Gideon while he was threshing wheat secretly in a wine-press near his home, to avoid the notice of the Midianitish hordes (6:12-22), and appointed him to be the deliverer of the people. For a notice of Gideon's life, see above. Gideon was probably a middle-aged man at this time, as he was the younger son (6:15), but had a son of his own almost grown up (8:20). The angel's words imply that he had in him both piety and heroism. God chooses fitting instruments for his work. "Like Cincinnatus at his farm, and David among his sheep, and Cromwell in the flats of Huntingdonshire, and Washington on his plantation in Virginia, Gideon was quietly doing his humble task, not wishing nor dreaming of a wider horizon or more conspicuous work, when the summons came to him, the divine Voice that dragged him from peaceful privacy and thrust him to the front." — *Alexander McLaren, D.D.*

APPLICATIONS. 1. Gideon had the wise caution to make himself sure that he was called of God before he went on with his work. True, strong faith wants a sure foundation on which to stand. It is credulity, not faith, which accepts things as true without thorough examination and proof.

2. This work to which Gideon was called was practically a revival of religion. All through this history we see that the object was to bring the people back to the love and service of God, and to holier lives. God approves of revivals of religion.

3. When God has a work to do, he does it through his children. He raises up men as his instruments.

4. Like Gideon, "prophets and lawgivers and God's heroes ever shrink from great tasks, and are humbled, not exalted, when large fields of service open before them. It is the spirit in which alone true work for God is ever done. Braggart self-confidence, and ambitious seeking for high positions, as peacocks will get up on a wall to show their tails, should have no place in the hearts of God's soldiers." — *McLaren*.

III. **Gideon's Preparation for his Work.** — FIRST. All his previous faithfulness in daily life, his unselfishness, his piety, had been preparing him unconsciously for the great work of his life.

SECOND. He was prepared for his larger work by a lesser duty which required the same qualities, and which tested his fitness, awoke in him a consciousness of his own possibilities, through the aid of God, strengthened his faith in God, and proved the weakness of the gods on which Israel's enemies depended. Gideon had a work to do in his own village, and in his father's house. The very day of his call he built an altar on the spot near the wine-press, hallowed by the visit of the angel, and dedicated it to Jehovah-Shalom — "Jehovah-peace," "Jehovah (who brings) better days." "Now Joash, his father, had so far yielded to the evil ways of the time as to have built an altar to Baal, on the top of the cliff in which was the wine-press, and also an Asherah, or wooden pillar to represent Ashtoreth, at its side. but the new altar to Jehovah could not tolerate such abominations near it. Waiting till darkness fell, Gideon bravely threw down the one, with the help of ten of his slaves, and

1. Then Jerubbaal, ¹who *is* Gideon, and all the people that *were* with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well^a of Harod: so that^b the host of the Midianites were^c on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

2. And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that *are* with thee *are* too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel ²vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.

Rev. Ver.: a. spring; b. and the camp of Midian; c. was. ¹ Judg. 6: 32. ² Deut. 8: 17. Isa. 10: 13.
1 Cor. 1: 29. 2 Cor. 4: 7.

not only cut down the other, but split it up for fuel; and having laid it on the altar of Jehovah, used it to consume, in sacrifice to him, a bullock which his father had apparently consecrated to Baal."—*Geikie*. Every blow at Baal's altar expressed the conviction that the political disasters were the result of yielding to idolatry, and the use of the wooden idol as fuel for Jehovah's sacrifice showed the supremacy of Israel's God. Gideon's action was like that of the brave Hawaiian princess Kapiolani, who defied the very home of the idols her people worshipped, on the brink of a terrible volcano. The citizens were angry when they discovered what Gideon had done, and would have stoned him to death had not Gideon's father defended him by the clever irony that if Baal were really the god they imagined, he could easily defend himself. It was from this event that Gideon was named Jerubbaal, "contender against Baal" (7: 1).

THIRD. Gideon was prepared for his work by divine works proving to him that it was God who had sent him on his great mission; and also enabling him to prove to those he summoned to his aid, that he was a leader commissioned of God. In answer to a prayer "folded in the envelope of a redoubled promise like a jewel set in a golden circlet," a fleece left out all night was filled with dew, while the ground was dry. Then the next night the fleece was dry, while the ground was wet.

APPLICATIONS. 1. By daily duties done from worthy motives we are prepared for our life's work. Life is ennobled by doing even the smallest actions with the noblest motives.

2. By lesser works faithfully done we are prepared for the larger works God may give us to do.

3. God is ever ready to strengthen our faith, by special acts of his providence, by wonderful answers to prayer, by the marvellous works recorded in his Word, and all through the history of his people.

IV. **Gideon's Army.**—Vers. 1-7. Gideon sent messengers to four neighboring tribes, Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and summoned them to come and drive out the invaders.

1. And pitched beside the well of Harod . . . the hill of Moreh. Harod means *trembling*, and the name was probably given from the soldiers who were "afraid." The well of Harod was a fountain, now called Ain Jâlûd, at the foot of Mt. Gilboa, near the site of Jezreel in the eastern part of the plain of Esdraelon. "It is 150 feet in circumference, and the stream from it is large enough to turn a mill. Northward of this rises little Hermon, which is identified with the *hill Moreh*, in the valley below which the enemy were encamped. This valley opposite little Hermon is about two and a half miles wide; it extends to the Jordan; and the enemy probably had ascended to the heart of the country by it, and many of them fled by it after the battle."—*Johnson*. The plain of Esdraelon has in all ages been the battle-field of Palestine. Here fought Thothmes III., Rameses II., and Rameses III.; here Pharaoh Necho won that sad battle of Megiddo, in which king Josiah was slain, amidst a slaughter so terrible that the great conflict of the Apocalypse is called, from it, the battle of Armageddon—"the hill of Megiddo." Here have fought in turn the armies of Assyria, of the Crusaders, and of Bonaparte; and it was on the mountains of Gilboa, at its east end, that Saul and Jonathan perished.—*Geikie*. **The host of the Midianites.** The Midianites were a powerful and celebrated nation of Arabia, which sprung from Midian the fourth son of Abraham, by Keturah. They inhabited chiefly the country east of the Jordan and southward, and for a long time were the virtual rulers of Arabia.

2. The people that are with thee are too many. Though the whole army of the Israelites consisted of only 32,000, while that of the Midianites amounted to at least 135,000, or four to one to the Israelites.—*Bush*. **Lest Israel vaunt themselves against me.** Become proud and vainglorious, as if by their own strength they had gained the victory.

3. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying,¹ Whosoever *is* fearful and afraid,^d let him return and depart early^e from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

4. And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people *are* yet *too* many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, *that* of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

5. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

Rev. Ver.: *d.* trembling; *e.* omit early. ¹ Deut. 20: 8.

The victory would amount to very little unless it taught the people that all their hope was in God, and in obeying him, and thus led them to trust in the power and goodness of God, and to cleave to him as their only Saviour.

THE FIRST TEST. 3. **Whosoever is fearful . . . let him return.** The appeal which Gideon is here directed to make was prescribed in the law (Deut. 20:8) for every war in which the Israelites should be engaged, and its general object was to fortify the spirit of the army by removing the cowardly and desponding. — *Keil*. It was a measure for the discovery of proper bravery. In other words, this proclamation — even yet heard in the East at times — is that which answers to our *call for volunteers*. — *Prof. I. Hall*. **Depart early from mount Gilead.** The only known Mount Gilead was on the other side of Jordan where half the tribe of Manasseh belonged. "Hence Ewald conjectures that the phrase "mount Gilead" had become a synonym for the tribe of Manasseh, of which Gideon was not only a member (6:15), but now leader (6:35), and that it was here used as a sort of rallying-cry of the tribe whose chief strength was in Mount Gilead"; just as in the Border wars the Scotch clans would speak of one deserting clan Alpine, referring to the soldiers, wherever they were, without regard to the far-away home of the clan. **And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand:** or more than two-thirds of Gideon's army. They were afraid of the immense army of the Midianites on the opposite heights. They had become accustomed to being ravaged by their wild hordes, and had lost courage. They had not served God faithfully, and knew that they did not deserve his favor. And Gideon their leader had not proved his ability. "They had probably been the foremost in boasting, for the courage which blusters most noisily at a distance evaporates most quickly when danger is at hand." — *R. R. Meredith*.

4. **The people are yet too many.** It is hardly possible to conceive a severer trial of faith than that to which Gideon's was now subjected. While he doubtless thought his men *too few*, God saw that they were *too many*, and ordered a still further reduction. — *Bush*.

THE SECOND TEST. **Bring them down unto the water.** The fountain of Harod below them, on the way to meet the Midianites.

5. **Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth.** You have seen a dog running along the bank of a water or in the shallow of a stream, and, without stopping, snatching mouthfuls or tonguefuls of water, too intent on his pursuit to take a leisurely drink, never even while slaking his thirst turning aside or pausing from the chase. — *Marcus Dods*. The men who did not break rank, or stop their march, but dipped their hollowed palm into the stream, and tossed a little into their mouth as they ran, "drank for strength." They took the refreshment that came in their road, but they took it to help them for their work. — *McLaren*. They employed their hand as the dog employs his tongue, — that is, forming it into a hollow spoon, and dipping water with it from the stream. This mode of drinking is often practised in the East, and practice alone can give that peculiar tact which generally excites the wonder of travellers. The interchange of the hand between the water and the mouth is managed with amazing dexterity, and with nearly or quite as much rapidity as the tongue of the dog in the same act. The water is not *sucked* out of the hand, but by a peculiar jerk is thrown into the mouth before the hand is brought close to it, so that the hand is approaching with a fresh supply almost before the preceding has been

6. And the number of them that lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, were^a three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

7. And the LORD said unto Gideon,¹ By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the *other*^b people go every man unto his place.

Rev. Ver.: *g.* was; *h.* omit other. 1 1 Sam. 14: 6.

swallowed; which constitutes another resemblance to the action of the dog's tongue.—*Bush.* The number of those who did this was 300 (ver. 6), and they were placed by themselves. **Likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.** They bowed down to the brook with their mouths to the water, and drank leisurely, comfortably, stopping in their march, and hindering the company, and making a disturbance. All the rest of the 10,000 drank in this way.

THE MORAL QUALITY OF THIS TEST. 1. The 300 showed more eagerness and earnestness for the battle, and were therefore more strong and courageous, while the slower mode of drinking suggested that those who drank in that way were not sorry for any little delay in meeting the enemy.

2. The 300 showed more care for others, and for the cause, in so drinking as not to hinder the march, or break the ranks, or interfere with the progress of the army.

3. It can scarcely be doubted that those who threw themselves on the ground and drank freely were the more self-indulgent; while those who, remembering the near presence of the enemy, slaked their thirst with moderation, and without being off their guard for an instant, were the true soldiers of the army of God.—*Cook.* Surely there cannot be much room for the display of luxurious habits in the way of drinking at a spring. Aye, but there are two ways of doing everything, and self-indulgence does not depend on the richness of the fare, but on the temper of the eater. Gideon needed men of endurance, Spartan in habit, and caring more about the grim task they had to do than about ease. He was like the old Highland chief who kicked away the snowball which his son had rolled for a pillow on a foray, rebuking the degeneracy and luxury of the age.—*McLaren.*

4. The most apparent natural reason seems to be that, as the season was hot, and most of the soldiers would be thirsty, all but a few of the freshest or least fatigued of them would be apt to drink a great deal, and be unfit for further immediate service, as Orientals are apt to do in such circumstances.—*Prof. I. Hall.*

5. Probably the more prevalent Jewish interpretation is also correct. The worship of Baal was accompanied by prolonged prostrations, so that his worshippers became accustomed to this attitude, and it was more natural for them to assume it in drinking. The others who remained erect, had not been brought up in his worship, but in that of Jehovah, which was not performed with such prolonged, repeated, and superstitious prostrations; they were therefore favored by him in being made the victors. True religion always cultures those qualities which give even earthly success, while superstition benumbs them.—*Johnson.*

7. **By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you.** It must have required great faith on the part of Gideon and the few who remained (Heb. 11: 32); and they are worthy of remembrance as religious heroes. Only faith in God could have led them to indulge in such perfectly foolish hopes as theirs seemed to be. Gideon should not be blamed for the anxiety recognized by God in verse 10, and mercifully quieted by the interposition recorded in verses 9-15. Gideon seems never to have doubted God's ability and willingness to save Israel, but only his own call to work out the deliverance; not God's faithfulness to fulfil his promises, but his own reception of a real promise.—*Johnson.*

WHY SO SMALL A NUMBER CHOSEN. 1. In order that the Israelites might plainly see that the victory was from God and not from themselves. 2. To remind them that the God who had done wonders for their fathers was unchanged, and able and willing to do great things for them. 3. To shame and humble his people for their past cowardice in tamely submitting to the yoke of Midian. 4. Thus the people would be led to God by his goodness and his greatness, and would worship and obey him.

APPLICATIONS. 1. The first condition of a revival of religion is for God's people to be in such a position that all the honor will be given to God, and not to the human instrumentality. For the object is to lead men to God.

8. So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all *the rest*ⁱ of Israel every man unto his tent, and² retained those³ three hundred men: and the host^m of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

Rev. Ver.: *i.* the men of; *k.* but; *l.* the; *m.* the camp.

2. God tests his workers in various ways. Martyr times, hard work, reproaches, unpopular duties and truths, missionary labors, ~~test~~ the quality of God's people.

3. Christianity requires *men*. Doth but a foul word, or a frown, scare thee from Christ? Doth but the sight of the Midianites in the valley strike thee? Home then, home to the world; thou art not for the conquering band of Christ. If thou canst not resolve to follow him through infamy, prisons, racks, gibbets, flames, depart to thine house, and save thy life to thy loss. — *Bp. Hall*.

4. Many who have real faith and grace are unfit for special services, and unable to bear peculiar trials, from which, therefore, the Lord will exempt them, and to which he will appoint those to whom he has given superior hardiness, boldness, and firmness of spirit. — *Scott*.

5. This may help us to understand those providences which sometimes seem to weaken the church and its interests — its friends are too many, too mighty, too wise, for God to work deliverance by; God is taking a course to lessen them, that he may be exalted in his own strength. — *M. Henry*.

6. There is no virtue in asceticism, but there has never been, and there never will be, anything worth doing for man or for God except by men who "spurn delights, and live laborious days." God cannot make instruments "meet for the Master's use" out of professing Christians who drink long and deep draughts from the fountain of earthly pleasure, or stay their progress to drink of the water of which, if a man drink, he shall thirst again. — *McLaren*.

7. Our characters are revealed in our every act, even the most trivial and unconscious.

8. We should never be discouraged because our numbers are small, and our instrumentalities feeble. "One with God is a majority."

9. Gideon's victory was a prophecy of almost all the victories of good over evil. Christianity itself, the cause of Christ in each town or country. Modern missions are examples.

V. **The Battle and the Victory.** — Ver. 8. So the people took victuals, etc. This verse is rather obscure. A better sense is got by following the punctuation of the Septuagint and Chaldee versions: "*And they* (the three hundred) *took the victuals and trumpets of the people* (all the people of verse 7) *into their hands;*" i.e., as Jerome expresses by adding *pro numero*, as many of them as they required, so that each of the three hundred should have a trumpet and a pitcher. This explains how the three hundred came to have each a trumpet, and a pitcher, and a lamp. Gideon took them from the whole army of nine thousand and seven hundred men before he dismissed them. — *Cook*. **Their trumpets.** Trumpets were not usually in the hands of common soldiers, nor were lamps, or rather, torches. These belonged only to leaders, so that each of the hundred would appear to the Midianites as a leader of a large band. The pitchers were to cover the torches from being seen, making, as it were, a dark lantern. They also aided confusion by the noise of their breaking. In the Christian warfare the *trumpets* express our power of speaking for God. The *lamps* are our character and example, lighted by God's grace, and shining for men; and the *pitchers* represent our capacity of receiving the truth and the spirit of God. Thus armed, the Christian can enter upon the warfare against evil with the certainty of victory.

Gideon's attack was made at midnight. The 300 men were divided into three companies; and they seem to have stretched in a line nearly or quite around the enemy's camp, the men placed at considerable distance one from another (ver. 18), as the object was not to fight, but to terrify. The stratagem of Gideon was simple. The torches were concealed in the large pitchers, or bread-jars, until the men had taken their stations, so that their movement might not be detected. It was the duty of the leader of a band to blow the trumpet and give the war-cry. By him, in a night attack, stood a torch-bearer to light the way, and guide the soldiers so that they might always know where to find the leader; the torch at night was like the banner of day. Three hundred trumpets and torches represented 300 companies of troops. The breaking of the jars, the outflashing of the lights, the deafening blare of trumpets on every side, aroused the enemy from sleep. The Israelites seemed by the many lights and trumpets to be present in overwhelming numbers. Each heathen in the darkness mistook his neighbor for a foe. They slew one another. The panic was universal.

The invaders, encumbered with women and children, and plunder of flocks and herds, as nomadic invaders are always cumbered, fled in confusion, and scattered over the country, throughout which Gideon immediately sent runners to arouse the people. The fords of the Jordan were seized by the Israelites, and the destruction of the invaders was complete. The Midianites were so utterly annihilated that they do not reappear on the page of history (Judg. 6: 11-25; 7; 8: 1-28). — *Johnson*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Land and Book, new ed., II., 177-184; Marcus Dods' *Israel's Iron Age*; R. Wheeler Bush on *Joshua and Judges*; Geikie's *Hours with the Bible*; Stanley's *Jewish Church*; Fuller's *Pisgah, sight of Palestine*, Bk. II., chap. 8, § 11; E. Paxton Hood's *Lamps, Pitchers, and Trumpets*; Bossuet's "Sermon on the Prince of Condé," in *Pulpit Orators of France*; Talmage's *Sermons* (ser. 2). An excellent sermon by McLaren in the *S. S. Times* for Aug. 11, 1883.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Call attention to the two centuries in the history of Israel between the last lesson and this. Note the length of time they were prosperous, and the number of years they were oppressed. Show how this history is a confirmation of the promises and threatenings of God in Deut. 28.

SUBJECT,—THE SOLDIERS OF THE LORD.

I. THE ENEMIES TO BE OVERCOME (ver. 1). Apply to our enemies.

Illustration. In numbers and destructiveness the Midianites are compared to locusts. The Rev. F. W. Holland says that he has seen troops of locusts in Palestine, covering the ground for a mile in length, and 20, 30, or even 50 yards across. When they approach a village in their steady and constant advance, the people turn out, light fires round their fields, dig trenches and fill them with water, and try to beat the swarming thousands back with their cloaks and branches of trees; but in spite of all, they swarm up the trees and strip them of every green leaf, and crunch up every blade in the gardens on their line of march. — *Tristram's Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 317.

Illustration. The stony-ground hearers in Christ's parable of the sower (Matt. 13: 5, 20-22).

Illustration. The warfare against Mansoul in Bunyan's *Holy War*.

II. THE PREPARATION OF THE LEADER (ver. 1).

Illustrations. The Duke of Wellington, revisiting Eton, where he had received his early education, pointed to the playground and said, "There the battle of Waterloo was won." King David by overcoming the lion and the bear was prepared to overcome the giant Goliath of Gath.

III. THE PREPARATION OF THE ARMY (vers. 1-8).

Illustrations. Our characters are shown in our most trivial acts and words. Character has often been read by the handwriting. One's nationality, even the part of the country he comes from, his education, etc., are shown by slight variations in speech, or movements of the body. It is said that naturalists can tell the whole animal from one of the teeth or bones. Some years ago a sea captain brought to England from Madagascar a peculiar bone, from a collection he had found, of some extinct species of animals. It was put in the hands of the great naturalist Owen. He saw that it was the bone of the foot of some large bird, and from this single bone he drew a picture of the bird to which it must have belonged, and the drawing was placed in the British Museum. Some years afterwards the same captain brought the rest of the bones. They were put together, and placed alongside of Professor Owen's picture, when it was found that the professor had correctly seen the whole bird in the one bone.

IV. NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. Our enemies (Eph. 6: 11; 1 John 2: 15, 16). Faith the source of Gideon's power (Heb. 11: 32, 33). God's victories with feeble means (1 Cor. 1: 27, 28). The armor and qualities of the Christian soldier (Eph. 6: 13-18).

LESSON XI. — DECEMBER 16.

DEATH OF SAMSON. — JUDG. 16: 21-31.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Great men are not always wise.* — JOB 32: 9.

TIME. — Samson's death was about B.C. 1096, 126 years after the victory of Gideon, our last lesson. Samson judged Israel 20 years in Dan, B.C. 1116-1096, at the same time that Samuel was judge in other parts of Palestine.

PLACE. — 1. Zorah, the birthplace of Samson, was a village overlooking the valley of Sorek. It lay 20 miles east of Ashdod, and 13 miles west of Jerusalem, on a spur of the mountains, and was 1150 feet above the sea level. 2. Gaza, the place of Samson's death, was the chief of the five cities of the Philistines, 50 miles southwest of Jerusalem, 3 miles from the Mediterranean, and 10 miles from Askalon. It is one of the oldest cities in the world. — *Schaff.*

INTERVENING EVENTS.

	YEARS.	B.C.
Rest under Gideon.....	40.....	1222-1182
Ruth.....		
Rule of Abimelech.....	3.....	1182-1179
Judgeship of Tola.....	23.....	1179-1156
Judgeship of Jair.....	22.....	1156-1134

(Of which the last 20 years synchronized with the first 20 of Eli's judgeship.)

EAST ISRAEL.	YEARS.	B.C.
Oppression of Ammonites.....	18.....	1134-1116
Jephthah's judgeship.....	6.....	1116-1110
Ibzan's judgeship.....	7.....	1110-1103
Elon's judgeship (in part)...	9.....	1103-1094
	40	1134-1094

WEST ISRAEL.	YEARS.	B.C.
Oppression of Philistines.....	40.....	1134-1094
This period includes the last 20 years of Eli.....		1134-1114
It also included the first 20 years of Samuel.....		1114-1094
And the judgeship of Samson.....		1116-1096
	40	1134-1094

PRONUNCIATIONS. — Dā'gōn; Dēlī'lāh; Esh'tāōl; Mānō'āh; Philis'tines; Sō'rēk; Zō'rāh.

INTRODUCTION.

We pass over another interval of a century and a quarter, containing several interesting events, and draw near to the end of the period of the Judges. There have been many departures from God, and much evil, and yet on the whole there must have been not a little progress toward the true religion under the discipline of God's severity and mercy. This is shown by what is revealed to us in the story of Ruth, and by the general condition of the nation under Samuel, and the marvellous development of the kingdom under David.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Philistine Oppression. — In the Maritime Plain on the southwest of Palestine, between the Mediterranean and the Hills of Judah, lay a very rich country, "whose striking and characteristic feature was its immense fields of grain." This fertile country was held by the Philistines. Their name, from which that of "Palestine" is derived, means *the strangers* or immigrants. Towards the close of the wild and stormy period of the Judges, the Philistines were the most active and aggressive nation of Palestine. Strong in their military organization, fierce in their warlike spirit, and rich by their position and commercial instincts, they even threatened the ancient supremacy of the Phœnicians of the north. Their cities were the restless centres of every form of activity. Their commerce was widely extended. Their skill as smiths and armorers was noted; the strength of their cities attests their success as builders. But they were pre-eminently devoted to war, alike by sea and land. The Anakims, driven from Hebron, had settled among them. Egypt had been recently invaded by their fleet, and soon after, apparently while Jephthah was struggling with Ammon on the uplands of Gilead, their ships, sweeping from the harbors of Gaza and Askalon, had attacked Sidon, — the great Phœnician city in the north, — defeated its fleet, and taken the town, which henceforth sank into insignificance. — *Geikie.*

This warlike nation had overrun the southwestern part of Israel's possession for 40 years (13: 1). "They climbed the passes at their will, and harried the valleys, carrying off not only the harvest when ripe, but even men, women, and children to slavery. To secure the permanence of the conquest, they had, however, so completely disarmed the Hebrews as to force them to descend to a Philistine city for even the slightest repairs of their agricultural implements; no worker in iron being allowed among them" (1 Sam. 13: 19-21). — *Geikie*. It was against such an enemy that Samson was raised up.

II. Samson, Israel's Hero Defender. — 1. *His early life.* Samson means *sun-like*, the *sun-hero*; or, as Bertheau thinks, *the destroyer*. He was born at Zorah, in the tribe of Dan, near the northwest borders of Judah. It was close to the country of the Philistines. His father's name was Manoah of the tribe of Dan. His birth was announced by an angel, as if he were to have some special mission (see Judg. 13).

2. *His strength.* Samson was miraculously endowed with strength, which, in general, he used to deliver his nation from the power of the oppressor, although not always in the wisest way. He tore a lion to pieces with his hands; he carried off the city gates of Gaza; he slew a thousand warriors with the jaw-bone of an ass for his only weapon. Samson's great strength was an endowment from God (Judg. 13: 25), on condition of his living the life of a Nazarite, "one separated." It required (Num. 6: 2-5) total abstinence from grapes, wine, and all intoxicating liquors; that the hair should go uncut; and that all contamination with dead bodies be avoided. It was usually a temporary vow, but Samuel, Samson, and John the Baptist were perpetual Nazarites. The meaning of the vow was probably "entire consecration to God."

"God, when he gave me strength, to show withal
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair." — *Milton, Samson Agonistes*.

3. *His work.* Living in a region peculiarly exposed to the raids of the Philistines, Samson was for 20 years a bulwark against their incursions. He raised no armies; he organized no warfare, but only performed feats of heroism and prowess. These are recorded in chaps. 14 and 15. He was engaged to marry a young Philistine woman of Timnath, about three miles from Zorah his home. At the seven-days' wedding feast, he gave a riddle, something like the one proposed to Edipus by the Sphinx. The riddle was one derived from his finding a swarm of bees in the carcass of a lion he had slain. "In Herodotus 5: 114, we read of bees filling the skull of Onesilus with honey; though Shakespeare says, 'Tis seldom when the bee doth leave her comb in the dead carrion,' Hen. IV., pt. ii., act 4." In consequence of this riddle he makes an incursion upon the Philistines. Several other circumstances lead to exhibitions of his power which restrained the Philistines from their raids.

4. *His character.* Samson, with a gift which might have been of great use, was yet morally weak, and lived far from an exemplary life. But we must judge of his immoralities by the light of a corrupt age, which had scarcely a rebuke for the kind of sins he committed. He was generally devoted to the cause of his people. He was good-natured. "He was full of the spirits and pranks no less than of the strength of a giant. Nothing can disturb his radiant good humor. His most valiant, his most cruel actions, are done with a smile on his face, and a jest in his mouth." — *Stanley*. "He was rough and savage towards his enemies, yet coolly shrewd about it all, never showing sudden outbursts of fiery passion." — *Steele*.

III. Samson's Fall. — Vers. 21-25. **FIRST, FROM WHAT HE FELL.** Samson was designed for great things. If he had been true to himself and to his God, he might have risen to any height. Four times it is declared that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him" in connection with his feats of strength (13: 25; 14: 6, 19; 15: 14). This was the philosophy of all his strength. He was powerful because God was specially with him and in him. A frail man may become mighty through God. Through God Joshua's feeble voice held the sun and moon, and the touch of Elisha and the voice of Peter had power to wake the sleeping dead. Now it was from this exalted position that Samson fell. He departed from God, and then "the Lord departed from him." Let him depart from us and we are ruined. — *Meredith*.

SECOND, THE CAUSE OF HIS FALL. The cause must be sought in himself. He yielded to his own blind passions, and trampled on the law of his God. Morally, a man falls of his own will. Satan himself cannot hurl him down from the heights of virtue against his own will. God gives us manhood and strength. Indulgence in sin robs us of manhood, and leaves us powerless. He did not fall at once. His descent was very gradual, and almost imperceptible to himself. He tampered with appetite and gratified his animal desires; and thus gradually sliding away from the virtuous and true, he lost his power before he was aware

21. But^a the Philistines took^b him, and put out his eyes, and^c brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

22. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.

Rev. Ver.: *a.* and; *b.* laid hold on him; *c.* and they.

of it. It doubtless seemed like a sudden catastrophe, yet the progress of sin was very gradual over his heart. And furthermore, with every sin there comes a blunting of that moral capacity by which you detect its presence. Samson "wist not that the Lord was departed from him." — *Meredith*.

"What is strength without a double share
Of wisdom! vast, unwieldy, burdensome." — *Milton*.

Falling in love with a woman of Sorek, named Delilah, he became so infatuated by his passion that nothing but his bodily strength could equal his mental weakness. The princes of the Philistines, aware of Samson's infirmity, determined by means of it to get possession, if possible, of his person. Delilah, by many temptations and blandishments, learned from Samson the secret of his strength. A moment of weakness disclosed to her the fact that it lay in his hair, which, if it were shaved, would leave him a mere common man. Not that his strength really lay in his hair, for this, in fact, had no natural influence upon it one way or the other. His strength arose from his relation to God as a Nazarite; and the preservation of his hair unshorn was the *mark or sign* of his Nazariteship, and a *pledge* on the part of God of the continuance of his miraculous physical powers. If he lost this sign, the badge of his consecration, he broke his vow, and consequently forfeited the thing signified. God abandoned him, and he was thenceforward no more in this respect than an ordinary man. His treacherous paramour seized the first opportunity of putting his declaration to the test. She shaved his head while he lay sleeping in her lap; and at a concerted signal, he was instantly arrested by his enemies lying in wait. Having so long presumptuously played with his ruin, heaven leaves him to himself, as a punishment for his former guilty indulgence. He is made to reap as he had sown, and is consigned to the hands of his relentless foe. — *McClintock and Strong*.

THIRD, TO WHAT HE FELL. 21. But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes: instead of putting him to death. Thus, effectually, as they thought, preventing any future mischief on his part, while they prolonged their own triumph and revenge. — *Cook*. There being in that age no regular prisons, a privative infliction of this nature was resorted to, not only to lessen the chances of escape, but to render the man harmless if escape should be made. — *Kitto*. "His eyes were the first offenders which betrayed him to lust; and now they are first pulled out." To disable a rival, not to mention an enemy (as here), by boring out his eyes, has ever been a common expedient in the East. Even to-day it is not unknown. In Persia, it is said by a number of competent witnesses, children of the royal blood are accustomed to a kind of game of blindfold, whose ostensible purpose is to familiarize them with the possible future blindness of the sort. — *Professor Isaac Hall*. And bound him with fetters of brass: rather, copper. In the Hebrew "brasses," or "coppers," as we say "irons," but in the dual number implying their application to the two feet. — *Cook*. Common prisoners were bound with ropes or thongs. And he did grind in the prison house. This grinding was performed by hand-mills, the uppermost stone of which, called "the rider" by the Hebrews, was made to revolve upon the other by strength of hand. This task was usually performed by female slaves. To grind corn *for others*, was, even for a woman, a proverbial term expressing the most degraded and oppressed condition. — *Bush*. Samson, the fool of women all his life, set, in his blindness, to do a woman slave's work in turning the hand-mill as he sat on the floor, was the very superlative of humiliation. — *Geikie*. But it is more probable that Samson was degraded to the state of a *beast*, and made to turn such a mill as that alluded to in, say, Luke 17: 2; that is, a mill usually turned by asses or mules. — *Professor Hall*. The silence of Scripture on this period of Samson's life is supplied, as far as possible, by sanctified human genius, in Milton's *Samson Agonistes*. — *Wm. Smith*.

22. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again. The Hebrew literally is, "And the hair of his head began to sprout (be luxuriant, or bud, or blossom) as when he was shaven." The meaning is that he had now his full head of hair again. — *Professor Hall*. And it is implied that his strength grew with it. — *Kitto*. From the return of his strength

23. Then^d the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.

24. And when the people saw him,¹ they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew^e many of us.

25. And it came to pass, when their hearts were² merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made^g them sport: and they set him between the pillars.

Rev. Ver.: *d.* and; *e.* hath slain; *g.* made sport before them.

¹ Dan. 5: 4.

² Judg. 9: 27.

with the growth of his hair, we can only understand that he repented, and renewed voluntarily the vows of devotion which had been imposed upon him before his birth, and which he had so miserably broken. — *Kitto*.

23. Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together: probably at Gaza (ver. 21). The most famous temples of Dagon were at Gaza and Ashdod. **Unto Dagon their god:** a sea idol described in 1 Sam. 5: 4, which exactly agrees with the representations of a fish-god on the walls of Khorsabad, on slabs at Kouyunjik, and on sundry antique cylinders and gems (Layard's *Nineveh*, Vol. II., p. 466; *Nin. and Bab.*, p. 343). In these the figures vary, some having the human form down to the waist, with that of a fish below the waist, others having a human head, arms, and legs, growing, as it were, out of a fish's body, and so arranged that the fish's head forms a kind of mitre to the man's head, while the body and fins form a kind of cloak, hanging down behind. — *Cook*. To a race like the Philistines, living on the sea-coast, the fish was a natural emblem of fruitfulness. — *Watson*. **Our god hath delivered.** They attributed their victory to their god, and hence regarded the idol as superior to Jehovah, whose servant was overthrown.

24. **They praised their god.** Samson now saw with deep intensity of shame and sorrow how the name of the Lord had been dishonored through his misconduct. Yet out of this despair he gathered hope. He was aware that Jehovah was a jealous God, and that he knew well how to vindicate the honor of his own great name. The question was now put upon a different ground. It was no longer a matter between Samson and the Philistines, but between Dagon and Jehovah. — *Kitto*.

25. **Call for Samson, that he may make us sport.** 1. Rather, *that he may play for us, i.e., dance and make music*. The dancing was always accompanied by vocal and instrumental music. — *Cook*. He was probably known to be an accomplished dancer, his great agility and strength enabling him to excel in this art. The sexes never mingled in the ancient Eastern dance. The dance was considered a gymnastic

exercise fit for a warrior. — *Johnson*. 2. Passively, that he may be a subject of sport and merriment to us; that we may make ourselves merry at his expense. The idea, doubtless, is simply that he should be brought out to become a laughing-stock to them, a butt for their scoffs, mockeries, and insults. — *Bush*. **And they set (or placed) him between the pillars:** in full view of the people. He was not made to dance between the two pillars, but to stand there, after the dancing was done, to receive the jests of the lordly feasters.



DAGON.

26. And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth,^a that I may lean upon them.

27. Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the ¹roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

28. And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord God,² remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

29. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood,ⁱ and^k on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of^l the other with his left.

Rev. Ver.: *h.* resteth; *i.* rested; *k.* and leaned upon them, the one with; *l.* omit of. ¹ Deut. 22:8.

² Jer. 15:15.

IV. Samson's Repentance and Triumphant Death. — Vers. 26-31. The FIRST mark of repentance is implied in the growth of his hair and the return to his Nazarite vow, as we have seen above. The SECOND reason for believing that Samson repented is the effect of trial and sorrow upon one who is true at heart, especially as seen in the light of his last hours. With blinded eyes he began spiritually to see; fettered with chains he became free; under slavish labor he ripened for the freedom of God. The greatness of the fallen Samson consisted in this, that like all noble natures in similar circumstances, he became greater and freer in the deepest suffering than he had been before. — *Lange*. It is better for Samson to be blind in prison than to abuse his eyes in Sorek; yea, I may safely say, he was more blind when he saw licentiously than now that he sees not; he was a greater slave when he served his afflictions than now grinding for the Philistines. The loss of his eyes shows him his sin, neither could he see how ill he had done till he saw not. — *Bishop Hall*.

26. **And Samson said unto the lad.** Being blind, a boy was employed to lead him about by the hand, and place him where he was required to go. — *Johnson*. **Suffer me that I may feel the pillars.** He probably was weary, not merely pretended to be, with his dancing and enduring the mockery of the crowds. **Whereupon the house standeth.** It appears from the narrative that there was a flat roof, from the top of which, as well as under it, spectators could see what was being done on the stage in front, and that this roof was mainly supported by two pillars, standing, apparently, in the centre of the open front of the building and so close to the stage without. The lords and principal persons seem to have sat within, under the roof, while the people, to the number of 3,000, stood on the flat roof. — *Cook*. A further explanation may be found in the peculiar topography of Gaza. Most of it is built on hills, which, though comparatively low, have declivities exceedingly steep. The temple was erected over one of these, beyond a doubt, for such was and is the custom in the East; and in such a position, if the central columns were taken out, the whole edifice would be precipitated down the hill in ruinous confusion. There is such a steep declivity on the northeast corner of the present city, near the old dilapidated castle. I am further inclined to believe that the immense roof which rested upon these columns was sustained by arches, and there is every reason to infer from the number of them that are found in the ruined cities of Palestine, that columns large enough to sustain immense roofs were common at that very early day. If this were so, and the centre columns stood on the brow of the declivity, the whole edifice would be precipitated down the hill merely by tearing away, as Samson did, these central supports. — *Thomson's Land and Book*.

27. **There were upon the roof about three thousand men and women:** the common people. The roofs of Gaza were then flat as they are now, but it does not require a very large space to contain 3,000 people, standing as close as they can be packed. — *Thomson*. These were in addition to the large numbers of the more distinguished persons under the roof.

28. **And Samson called unto the Lord.** This is the third evidence of his repentance. **That I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.** The margin of the Rev. Ver. has *avenged . . . for one of my two eyes*, as if the death of all these Philistines would be but fit retribution for only one of the eyes of which they had deprived him. It must be borne in mind that the words of Samson are not a mere vindictive imprecation on

30. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with *all his* might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than *they* which he slew in his life.

31. Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought *him* up, and ¹buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying-place of Manohah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

¹ Judg. 13: 25.

those who had personally injured him. If he had had no higher or worthier motive than this, the Lord would not have accepted his prayer, and answered it as he did. With all his weaknesses and sins, Samson was, nevertheless, God's appointed champion of his chosen people against their persecutors and oppressors. And he makes his appeal to God in this representative character, that he would vindicate his own honor against the worshippers of Dagon, his down-trodden Israel against the triumphant Philistines, his own appointed instrument against those who had done him a most cruel wrong. — *Professor Green*.

30. **Let me die with the Philistines:** I am willing to die, if only I can accomplish this victory. It is not a wish for death in itself considered, — though he had little to live for, — but “the blinded man perceives that the present moment holds out an occasion for victory, and avails himself of it, notwithstanding that it must cost him his own life. He knows that if his deed be successful, he cannot escape. But he is also ready to die. He is reconciled with his God.” — *P. Cassell*. “Samson no more committed suicide than does a brave general when, with certain death before him, he rushes into the thickest battle, confident that his fall will save his country from a hated foe.” — *D. Steele*. **And the house fell.** When the pillars were removed, the weight of 3,000 people brought the roof down with a fearful crash, and those above fell upon those below, together with the stones and timbers, and a great slaughter was the result, Samson himself perishing under the ruins. — *Cook*. **Upon the lords.** They are mentioned first because their death was of great political significance. The great numbers who perished would have had little effect upon the relations of the Philistines and the Israelites, if among them had not been the civil and military leaders of the former. — *Johnson*. **The dead which he slew at his death.** If three thousand were on the roof, there were doubtless as many more below. — *D. Steele*.

31. **Eshtaol:** a village near Zorah. **Judged Israel twenty years.** He must have begun his career of judge quite young, as the Philistine oppression lasted but 40 years (13: 1) and he was born after it began (13: 5). His office of judge was probably confined to the southwestern part of Canaan, to Dan, and the neighboring tribes. — *Johnson*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Land and Book, new ed., I: 179-188; generally, Milton's *Samson Agonistes* is an excellent commentary on the history of Samson. Marcus Dods' *Israel's Iron Age*; Geikie's *Hours with the Bible*; R. Wheeler Bush, on *Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*; Stanley's *Jewish Church* (ser. 1); Smith's *Old Testament History*, chap. 19; *Sermons* by Talmage (ser. 4), Hallam, Spurgeon (ser. 5), E. F. Hatfield in *The National Preacher*; Spurgeon's *Types and Emblems*.

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF SAMSON.

1. God uses even imperfect instruments for accomplishing his end.
2. Christians, like Samson, are separated from the world, consecrated to God, to overcome sin, the great enemy of God and man.
3. Strength of body or mind or spirit is a blessed gift of God.
4. The elements of strength in youth, — (1) silent energy; (2) reverence; (3) definiteness of aim; (4) self-forgetfulness. No athlete in the games can ever strike a full honest blow with his entire force, unless he gives himself utterly up to it with not one thought of the way he is going to look in the photograph of the ring afterwards. — *C. S. Robinson*.
5. When he broke his Nazarite vow, he lost his strength, and was taken captive. This was to teach the Israelites that all their strength lay in consecration to Jehovah, and that they had lost it by departing from their vows of allegiance. It teaches us the same lesson. — *Johnson*.

6. His weaknesses were providentially overruled so as to exhibit to Israel and to us the folly as well as the sin of such indulgences. The spectacle of Samson, the hero and judge, the strongest of his race, brought to death by the sin of his life, must have created awe. — *Johnson*.

7. The Israelites were taught that their national strength and hope lay in their obedience to God. He was able to give them the victory over every enemy.

8. We learn the perils of bad company. Whosoever goes willingly into bad company is already more than half fallen.

9. Those who are unfaithful to God will most likely prove unfaithful to us.

10. Sinful pleasures, like a common Delilah, lodge in our bosoms and tempt us to sin.

11. Ver. 24. The sins of Christians bring dishonor upon God.

12. God remembers the penitent and hears his prayer.

13. Samson was raised up to teach Israel, not only by success, but also by failure; not only by devotion to God, but also by departure from him; not only by his heroic life, but by his sad death. — *Johnson*.

14. Only by self-sacrifice can the greatest victories be won.

15. While we pity the *man*, we congratulate the *sinner*, to whose final salvation these heavy trials were made subservient.

16. Behold how wronged power revenges itself! How dreadful is it for any man or nation to have in their midst some great social wrong! It is a sleeping giant, or a blind Samson, waiting its time. Every social injustice, every strength unacknowledged in a community, at last vindicates itself, and "breaks its chain on the head of its oppressors." — *E. Paxton Hood*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Having CONNECTED this lesson with the last, we may well follow the order of the NOTES above.

SUBJECT, — LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF SAMSON.

I. THE GREAT OPPRESSOR. Chapter 13: 1, illustrated by 1 Sam. 13: 19-21, which belongs to not long after this time.

APPLICATION to sinful habits, to worldliness, selfishness, ambition, as oppressing and enslaving the world.

II. THE HERO-DELIVERER, with some account of his life and early history, strength, and heroic deeds.

Illustration. Samson has often been compared with the Greek Hercules, both on account of his strength, and his exploits. While there have been no others so strong as Samson, yet examples of great strength in lifting heavy weights and bending bars of iron, etc., take away all improbability from the story.

III. THE HERO'S FALL (vers. 21-25). 1. WHENCE? 2. WHY? 3. HOW? 4. WHITHER?

Illustration from Milton's *Samson Agonistes*. Samson speaks: —

"I . . . to God have brought
Dishonour, obloquy, and oped the mouths
Of idolists and atheists, have brought scandal
To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt
In feeble hearts, propense enough before
To waver, or fall off and join with idols.
* * * * *

"This only hope relieves me, that the strife

With me hath end, all the contest is now
'Twixt God and Dagon; Dagon hath presumed,
Me overthrown, to enter lists with God.
His deity comparing and preferring
Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
Will not connive or linger thus provoked,
But will arise, and His great Name assert."

Illustration. The story of Samson's temptations may be illustrated by the Grecian fables of Circe and her palace (given especially well in Hawthorne's *Tanglewood Tales*, see *Temperance Lesson*, p. 261); and by the sirens who sang upon the shore so sweetly that the sailors, entranced, steered their vessels toward them, leaving the way of duty, and were wrecked upon the shore. Orpheus passed by them safely, because he took his own lyre and made sweeter music than that of the sirens. See Homer's *Odyssey*. So the consciousness of the greater joys of religion, and the presence of Christ, will give us the victory over the attractions of sinful pleasure.

APPLICATION to the seductive power of strong drink, and the blindness, slavery, and misery to which it reduces its victims.

IV. THE HERO'S REPENTANCE AND TRIUMPHANT DEATH (vers. 26-31). Picture the great festival of the Philistines.

Illustration. Pliny describes two theatres built of wood by L. Curio, which, he says, were large enough to contain all the people of Rome, and were supported by a single hinge; and if this were to give way, there would be a greater slaughter than at the battle of Cannæ. — *Professor Green.*

V. NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT ON OLD TESTAMENT THEMES. Samson as a man of faith (Heb. 11: 32, 33); our duty to be strong (Eph. 6: 10; 1 John 2: 14); the source of true strength (Col. 1: 11; 1 Pet. 1: 5); how to overcome temptation (1 John 4: 4; Jude 24; 2 Pet. 1: 3-8).

LESSON XII. — DECEMBER 23.

RUTH'S CHOICE. — RUTH 1: 16-22

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.* — RUTH 1: 16.

TIME. — Keil, with great probability, places Ruth in the time of Gideon, B.C. 1222-1182. David was born B.C. 1085. He was the youngest son of Jesse, and probably born when Jesse was 50 years old. Jesse's birth would therefore be B.C. 1135. If Jesse was a younger son of Obed, and his father 50 years old at his birth, Obed's birth would be B.C. 1135 + 50 = 1185; so that the marriage of Ruth, the mother of Obed, would have taken place before the death of Gideon (1182), and Ruth's early life would fall wholly within Gideon's judgeship.

PLACE. — 1. Bethlehem, the early home of Naomi, was in Judah, six miles south of Jerusalem, then Jebus.

2. The country of Moab, the early home of Ruth. The land of Moab lay on the east of the Dead Sea and southern Jordan. In its wider sense it extended as far north as the brook Jabbok, and was 50 miles long and 20 miles wide. The field or country of Moab, referred to in Ruth, was the tract south of the Arnon, east of the Dead Sea. Many discoveries have lately been made in this region. "Everything in Moab gives evidence of its former wealth and cultivation."

THE BOOK OF RUTH. — 1. *Its name* is derived from the principal character described in it.

2. *Its author* is unknown, but some of the Jewish traditions ascribe it to Samuel.

3. *The time of its writing* is uncertain, but doubtless after the birth of David, perhaps during his reign, the genealogy at its close ending with David's name.

4. *Its character.* The book gives a charming view of the domestic life of pious Israelites even during the most troubled times. Had we only drawn our impressions from the records of violence and crime contained in the Book of Judges, we should have been ready to conclude that all the gentler virtues had fled from the land while the children of Israel were alternately struggling for their lives and liberties with the tribes of Canaan, or yielding themselves to the seductions of Canaanite idolatry. But the Book of Ruth, lifting up the curtain which veiled the privacy of domestic life, discloses to us most beautiful views of piety, integrity, self-sacrificing affection, chastity, gentleness, and charity, growing up amidst the rude scenes of war, discord, and strife. — *Cook.*

PRONUNCIATIONS. — Bō'áz; Chīl'ōn (ch = k); Mā'rā; Māh'lōn; Nāō'mī, or Nā'ōmī; Or'pāh; Rūth.

INTRODUCTION.

The transition from Judges to Ruth is like passing from some dark, overshadowing cloud into bright and glorious sunlight, from scenes of confusion, uproar, and unrest into those of quietness and peace. We seem to pass, so to speak, "from the dark terrific scenes of a tragedy of Æschylus to the fresh and beautiful landscapes of some pastoral idyl of Theocritus." — *R. Wheeler Bush.*

EXPLANATORY.

I. **The Emigrants.** — During the rule of the Judges, probably near the time of Gideon, there arose a great famine in the land of Israel, which must have lasted several years. It may have been caused in part by the seven years' oppression of the Midianites, B.C. 1229-1222, from which Gideon delivered Israel. Their invasions were generally

attended by a great destruction of the produce of the soil. They came like grasshoppers for multitude and destructiveness (Judg. 6: 1-6), so that the people fled to the mountain fastnesses and hid in caves, the land lay uncultivated, the cattle were carried off or destroyed, and famine stalked through the land, made doubly grievous, probably, by drought. In the village of Bethlehem, afterwards made famous as the birthplace of David and of "David's greater Son" Jesus, lived a well-to-do man named Elimelech (*my God is king*) with his wife Naomi (*attractive* or *God is sweet*), "originally imposed as a name by some grateful and happy mother, who, by gracious providences, or by other gracious revelations, had been led to think that 'sweet are the ways, sweet are the dealings, and sweet is the character of God.'" — *James Morison*. They had two sons, Mahlon (*sickly*) and Chilion (*the pining one*).

Finding it difficult to obtain a living on the home farm on account of the famine, and perhaps afraid of the roving bands of the invaders, the family determined to emigrate to some safer and more fruitful region, even though it would compel them to bring up their children amid heathen surroundings. "The Jewish writers generally think that they did wrong in leaving their own country to go and live among idolaters. Observing that the law of the old covenant contained promises of unfailing subsistence to those who trusted in God, it is held that it had been the more faithful part for them to have remained, trusting to the Lord for their sustentation. They found death in the land of their choice, which the Jewish writers believe to have befallen them as a judgment." — *Kitto*. They went across the Jordan, probably at the fords of Jericho, turned to the south along the eastern shores of the Dead Sea, and settled among the rich fields of the Moabites. Here great changes came to the family. In the course of ten years, the sons married Moabitish women, and both sons and Elimelech their father died in the land of Moab, leaving the three women widows.

II. The Parting Scene on the Road Home. — "Of the two sexes," says Fuller, "the woman is the weaker; of women, old women are most feeble; of old women, widows most woeful; of widows, those that are poor, their plight most pitiful; of poor widows, those that want children, their case most doleful; of widows that want children, those that once had them and after lost them, their estate most desolate; of widows that have had children, those that are strangers in a foreign country, their condition most comfortless. Yet all these met together in Naomi, as in the centre of sorrow, to make the measure of her misery pressed down, shaken together, running over." The widowed Naomi, poor, in distress, among strangers, became homesick for her native land, her kindred, the people of God, and the religious aids and consolations of her youth. The famine is over, Gideon has overcome the oppressors, the people have turned toward God. Accordingly she sets out on her return home. The two widowed daughters-in-law, Orpah (*a fawn*) and Ruth (*friend*, or *rose*, "the Rose of Moab") went part of the way to see Naomi off, as friends and relatives were accustomed to do, and as is still the custom in the East. When the time came to part, when they had kissed each other and wept together, they both declared they would not return, but would go with her to Israel. "Like a wise woman, she declined to take advantage of the impulse of passionate regret, which seemed adverse to their temporal welfare, and which their cooler judgment might not sanction, and urged them, by many strong arguments, to return. Once more they wept, but Orpah was prevailed upon, and gave Naomi the farewell kiss" (*Kitto*), the customary friendly and respectful salutation in the East. — *Cook*. "Both had heroic resolutions; only one kept them." Orpah went back to her own people. The Moabites were the declared enemies of Israel, and God had denounced them. Orpah went back to her old life. She had been enlightened by Naomi concerning the difference in habits, customs, and hopes of Israel; but now she preferred her own tastes and educations and prospects. Orpah therefore went back to her former gods. The saddest thing of all is, that if we think of her any more as a praying woman, we must picture her as worshipping the savage Chemosh, in rites of dangerous idolatry. We wonder whether she ever thought of her old prayers (2 Pet. 2: 20, 21). — *C. S. Robinson*. Orpah's kiss showed she had an affection for Naomi, and was loth to part from her, yet she did not love her well enough to leave her country for her sake. Thus, many have a value and affection for Christ, and yet fall short of salvation by him, because they cannot find it in their hearts to forsake other things for him. They love him, and yet leave him, because they do not love him enough, but love other things better. Thus the young man that went away from Christ went away sorrowful (Matt. 19: 22) — *M. Henry*.

III. Ruth's Choice. — Vers. 16-18. Naomi used the same arguments to Ruth that she did to Orpah, with the additional weight of her sister-in-law's example. "God wrestled with Jacob with desire to be conquered; so Naomi, no doubt, opposed Ruth, hoping and wishing that she herself might be foiled." — *F. Fuller*. She, no doubt, was rather putting

16. And Ruth said, ¹Entreat me not to leave thee, *or*^a to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: ²thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God:

17. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the ³LORD do so to me, and more also, *if aught* but death part thee and me.

18. ⁴When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then^b she left speaking unto her.

Rev. Ver.: a. and; b. omit then.

¹ 2 Kings 2: 2-6. ² Ruth 2: 11, 12.
² Sam. 19: 13. ⁴ Acts 21: 14.

³ 1 Sam. 3: 17; 25: 22.

her daughter-in-law to a final test, and leading her to thorough self-sifting, than encouraging her to go back to her ancestral forms of worship. — *Pulpit Com.*

16. And Ruth said: the beauty of this reply of Ruth has been often and justly admired. **Entreat me not to leave thee.** All that Naomi had said, her solitariness, poverty, sorrow, only served to attach Ruth more firmly. Orpah, too, was attached and well disposed; but still, with eyes of love, although she had them, she yet saw herself, while Ruth saw only the beloved one. It might be said, with a certain degree of truth, that the same cause induced Orpah to go and Ruth to remain; the fact, namely, that Naomi had no longer either son or husband. Few among the natural children of men are as kind and good as Orpah; but a love like that of Ruth has scarcely entered the thoughts of poets. She refuses to leave her, for the very reason that she is poor, old, and childless. Rather than to leave her to suffer alone, Ruth will starve with or beg for her. — *Cassell*. **Whither thou goest, I will go,** etc. The effect of Naomi's repeated entreaties to Ruth to leave her was only to bring out more clearly Ruth's steadfast determination to cast in her lot with the people of the Lord. Compare the very similar entreaties of Elijah, and the steadfast determination of Elisha not to leave him (2 Kings 2: 2-6). In Elisha's case, as in Ruth's, the reward of steadfast persistence was very great. — *Cook*. **Thy people shall be my people.** All this passionate utterance of Ruth is a perfect type of what every one who becomes a Christian says to Christ and his church. He chooses them for better or for worse, in prosperity and in affliction. All he has, and all he hopes for, is joined with them. He will suffer with them, rejoice with them, work with them, worship with them, and at last abide forever with them in heaven. **And thy God my God.** Now this is a pattern of a resolute convert to God and religion. We must take the Lord for our God. "This God is *my God for ever and ever*; I have avouched him for mine." We must take his people for our people in all conditions; though poor and despised, yet, if they be his, they must be ours. We must be willing to fare as they fare; submit to the same yoke, and draw in it faithfully; take up the same cross, and carry it cheerfully; go where God would have us to go, lodge where he would have us to lodge, die where he will have us to die. — *Henry*.

17. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried. She wished to be naturalized for life in Naomi's fatherland. — *Pulpit Com.* She gives herself up wholly and forever to the people of God. **The Lord do so to me:** calling upon herself the severest punishment if she should break her promise. Ruth's use of the name of Jehovah shows that she was already a believer.

18. When she saw that she was steadfastly minded . . . she left speaking unto her. Naomi must dissuade in order that Ruth might freely, under no pressure but that of her own love, accept Israel's God and people. Only after this is done, and she holds firmly to her decision, does Naomi consent and cease to dissuade her. — *Cassell*.

APPLICATIONS. 1. A large part of the opposition to our serving the Lord, whether it arise from friends or enemies, will cease when it becomes manifest that we are invincibly determined on our course. It is against the young and undecided — those who are in the process of forming their opinions — that Satan and his emissaries wage their severest warfare. Those on the borders between two armies suffer most from the war. Much opposition will cease when we openly avow our choice, and it has been shown that we are fixed and immovable in it. — *P.* 2. How great a lesson is here for the church considered in its missionary character! The conduct of one Israelitish woman in a foreign land was able to call forth a love and confession of God like that of Ruth. Ruth loves a woman, and is thereby led to the God whom that woman confesses. Must not men love, if they would be loved? Only *love* opens the fountains of faith, but faith sanctifies and confirms love. — *Starke*.

19. So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that ¹all the city was moved about them, and they^e said, ²*Is this Naomi?*

20. And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21. I went out full, ³and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why *then*^d call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

Rev. Ver.: *c.* the women said; *d.* omit then.

¹ Matt. 21:10.

² Isa. 23:7. Lam. 2:15.

³ Job 1:21.

RUTH'S CHOICE. 1. Like Mary, she chose the good part; she made the best possible choice. 2. She chose in full view of all the consequences. It was a well-considered choice. 3. Her choice was of spiritual good, of right and duty and religion, at the cost of poverty and friendlessness and toil. 4. She was led to her choice of the God and religion through human affection. 5. She chose irrevocably. It was a life choice.

IV. **The Emigrant's Return.**—Vers. 19-22. 19. **They came to Bethlehem:** the early home of Naomi, which she had left ten years before. Here, too, she had a small estate (Ruth 4:3). **All the city was moved.** Bethlehem was a small town (Mic. 5:2);

and in such small villages, and especially in an age when there were no newspapers, mails, etc., every event flew quickly abroad by the communications of friend to friend. Naomi's return was an uncommon occurrence. The city, and especially the women, were thrown into peaceable uproar. Everybody ran, told the news, and wondered. For more than ten years had passed since she had left Bethlehem. Her husband, we know, belonged to a prominent family in the city. All this renders it natural that the news



that Naomi had returned, poor and sorrowful, spread like wildfire, and created what to her was an unpleasant sensation.—*Lange*. And they said: *they* in the Hebrew is feminine. *The women of Bethlehem said.* **Is this Naomi?** In these words there was an expression of amazement, not so much at the fact that Naomi was still alive, and had come back again, as at her returning in so mournful a condition, as a solitary widow without either husband or sons.—*Keil*.

20. **Call me not Naomi.** The meaning of Naomi is *pleasant, sweet*, to which she opposes what she calls a more appropriate name for her in her present circumstances. **Call me Mara: i.e., bitter** (Ex. 15:23).—*Cook*. Ten years have turned Naomi (*beautiful*) into Mara (*bitter*). What assurance is there of these earthly things whereof one hour may strip us? **For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.** While part of her troubles came from the famine and from those whom God allowed to oppress Israel on account of their sins, much of it may perhaps be attributed to her husband or to herself. No one is entirely free from blame. But God controls all these things. They are his medicine for the soul. He will give only so much as will work out good. It is a blessed thing to know that God's hand controls in love all that comes to us.

21. **I went out full:** i.e., rich; not in money and property, but in the possession of a husband and two sons; a rich mother, but now deprived of all that makes a mother's heart rich,—bereft of both husband and sons.—*Keil*. **The Lord hath testified against me:** has borne witness against me, that our going away was a sin. The testimony he bore was in the sad results that followed their course. (See under I., above.)

22. So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem ¹ in the beginning of barley harvest.

¹ Ex. 9: 31, 32. 2 Sam. 21: 9

22. Moab: see *Place*. **Barley harvest:** usually in the middle of April. The fact of its being barley harvest suggested to Ruth that she might contribute something to their mutual subsistence by going forth to glean. This right of gleaning was one of the legal provisions for the poor of Israel; and as the landholders were not subject to money taxes for the support of the poor, this claim was liberally construed by them. The part of the field to which Ruth was providentially directed belonged to Boaz, a near kinsman of Naomi's late husband. — *Kitto*.

V. The Reward of Devotion to Duty and to God. — The rest of the Book of Ruth tells the story of her recompense for her self-denying love, and giving up all to religion and to God. 1. She found a means of supporting her mother-in-law. 2. She won the respect and favor of the people among whom she lived. 3. She gained a most excellent husband and home. In Boaz we have a model for the character of a rich man in private life: we see one whose deep faith in God breaks out in every word of his lips, and every action of his life (2: 4, 11, 12; 3: 10, 11, etc.); one attentive to his own business and diligent in the care of his own property (2: 4; 3: 2); kind and friendly to his dependants, and beloved by them (2: 4); liberal, generous, and courteous to the poor and friendless stranger (2: 8, 9, 14, 15, 16; 3: 15); observing and appreciating virtue in others (2: 11, 12; 3: 11), and practising it himself under trying circumstances (3: 8-13); respecting the rights of others even when they interfered with his own wishes (3: 12, 13; 4: 4); observant of the laws of his country, though living in lawless times (4: 1-5, 9); mindful of his obligations to the living and the dead (2: 20; 4: 10); alive to the ties of kindred, of country, and of religion (4: 3; 2: 11, 12); and uniformly humble, quiet, and prudent in his conduct. — *Cook*. 4. Ruth had the honor of including among her descendants the great kings David and Solomon, and above all, Jesus the Christ, through his mother.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Commentaries, the same as on Judges; Aubrey Price's *Six Lectures on Ruth*; Thomas Fuller on *Ruth*; George Lawson's *Lectures on Ruth*; Stephen Tyng's *The Rich Kinsman*; W. Braden's *Beautiful Gleaner*; Bishop Oxenden's *Story of Ruth*; Samuel Cox's *Book of Ruth*; Dr. Andrew Thomson's *Home Life in Ancient Palestine*; Charles H. H. Wright's *Book of Ruth in Hebrew*; Edward Topsell's *Reward of Religion, Lectures upon the Book of Ruth*; Richard Bernard's *Ruth's Recompense*.

LESSONS FROM THE STORY OF RUTH.

1. The sure reward of filial devotion and trust in the Lord, and "the failure of all high reward to which selfishness leads."

2. The overruling providence of God in the private affairs of a humble family, as well as in the palace of princes, and the public events of nations. — *Schaff*.

3. The important evangelical lesson is as plainly taught in her case as in that of Cornelius, "that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him." — *Cook*.

4. Ruth is a prophecy, than which none could be more beautiful and engaging, of the entrance of the heathen world into the kingdom of God. She comes forth out of Moab, an idolatrous people, full of wantonness and sin, and is herself so tender and pure. Without living in Israel, she is first elevated, then won, by the life of Israel, as displayed in a foreign land. — *Lange*.

5. "Every soul decides to turn back to the sinful world, as did Orpah, or to press on to know God, as did Ruth. Perhaps you are now deciding for eternity! Alas, if your decision is like Orpah's!

6. When your friends are returning to God, it is a favorable time for you to accompany them, as Ruth accompanied Naomi.

7. A woman may be brave without being bold. None have ever been braver than

Ruth; yet she was delicate, affectionate, modest, recognizing the household as her true sphere of activity.

8. Ruth as a model daughter. Would that all daughters would take her as their pattern!

9. Ruth's conduct as a daughter-in-law worthy of all imitation.

10. God may suffer the righteous to fall into want and suffering for a time; but when he has tried them, he will bring them forth as gold refined and burnished.

11. The reply of Ruth to Naomi has been spiritualized in sermons somewhat thus: (1) *Whither thou goest, I will go*: It is blessed to go where God's people go, doing good in Christian activity, etc. (2) *Where thou lodgest, I will lodge*: The rest of the Christian, the rest of faith in the midst of his toil, and the rest of heaven after it, are blessed. (3) *Thy people are my people*: The Christian's associations, in this world and in the world to come, the most delightful and honorable. (4) *Thy God my God*: The Christian's God, to those who choose him, an infinite blessing; and he is infinitely superior, in power and mercy, to protect and bless, to all earthly wealth and distinction and pleasure, worshipped as God by so many myriads. (5) *Where thou diest, will I die*: The Christian's place of death, whether on the bed, the battle-field, or the stormy ocean, a blessed place; for it is just by the gate of heaven. (6) *There will I be buried*: The Christian's place of burial, on land or sea is blessed, not from the magical efficacy of churchly rites of consecration, but from the Providence which watches over his dust, to bring him forth from the grave at the last day. These considerations may be used in urging impenitent pupils to imitate Ruth's resolution.

— Johnson.

12. REASONS for choosing God's people as our people, and their God as our God. (1) Because their *God* is a glorious God, — excellent, mighty, holy, merciful, loving; (2) because their *people* are an excellent and happy people; (3) *happiness* is nowhere else to be had but in their God and with their people; (4) the example of Christians who have turned from the world should influence us; (5) our resolution should be fixed, because of the great difficulty of cleaving to God's people.

Consider (1) that your soul is as precious as theirs; (2) unless you choose, there will be an eternal separation between you and them; (3) consider the encouragements to seek the blessings others have obtained; (4) they desire you to go with them; (5) consider what a doleful company will be left. — Pres. Edwards.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The Book of Ruth. The place of this lesson among the Judges we have been studying. See that your scholars have read the whole Book.

SUBJECT, — LESSONS FROM THE STORY OF RUTH.

I. THE EMIGRANTS. As in *Explanatory*.

PICTURE the scenes, — the home life, the famine, the great question whether to emigrate, and the arguments that could be used in favor of and against going to live in a heathen land for the sake of worldly advantages.

Illustrate by Lot going to Sodom because it was a fertile region.

II. THE TWO CHOICES (vers. 16-18).

PICTURE the parting scene, and the arguments in Orpah's mind in favor of going, and in favor of staying.

Illustration. Orpah and Ruth, starting together for the promised land, and one returning to idolatry, while the other goes on to immortal blessedness, is paralleled by the characters in the early part of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, where Christian and his neighbors start together for the Celestial City. Christian goes on, while Obstinate and Pliable soon return to the City of Destruction.

APPLY Ruth's words to one deciding to become a Christian.

Illustration. The choice of Hercules between virtue and vice, as given in Greek mythology.

Illustration. A young lady in a time of religious interest sat down and wrote out all the reasons she could think of to help her to decide whom she should serve. She wrote (1) *Reasons why I should serve the world*. (2) *Reasons why I should serve the Lord*. She was surprised that she could find no satisfactory reason for the first, and urgent ones for the last. She acted upon her reason, gave herself to God, and was blest. — Foster's *Cyclopaedia of Illustrations*.

III. BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHT CHOICE (vers. 19-22). This blessedness never

obtained when sought for itself, for then it is not deserved; but only when people do right because it is right, because "love says so," not expecting reward, but only trials and difficulties.

Illustration.

"Take thou no thought for aught save truth and right,
Content, if such thy fate, to die obscure;
Wealth palls, and honors; fame may not endure,
And nobler souls soon weary of delight.
Keep innocence; be all a true man ought;
Let neither Pleasure tempt, nor Pain appall;
Who hath this, he hath all things, having naught;
Who hath it not hath nothing, having all."

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT ON OLD TESTAMENT THEMES.² The young man's choice like Orpah's (Matt. 19: 16-22); between what we must choose (Matt. 6: 33; Mark 10: 28-30); reasonableness of choosing God (Rom. 12: 1).

LESSON XIII. — DECEMBER 30.

REVIEW AND TEMPERANCE.**REVIEW.**

THE PERIOD OF THE CONQUEST. Seven years; B.C. 1451 to 1444.

THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES (including Joshua's losing years). 350 years; B.C. 1444-1094.

TERRITORY. The land of Palestine, on both sides of Jordan.

DIVISION OF THE LAND. Nine and a half tribes west of the Jordan, and two and a half east of the Jordan.

PERSONS. Joshua, the Captain of the Lord's host, Achan, Caleb, Gideon, Samson, Ruth.

SUBJECT, — THE UNFOLDING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

I. THE WORK TO BE DONE. (Lesson I.) Overcoming enemies and obstacles; bringing the land under the dominion of God's laws and God's people; making a happy, intelligent, religious, prosperous nation, which should enlighten the world. **THY KINGDOM COME.**

II. ENTERING UPON THE WORK. (Lessons II., III.) The story of the crossing, and its memorial. **CONVERSION.**

III. GOD'S MARVELLOUS WORKS. (Lessons II., IV., X., XI.) **REVIVALS, CONVERSION, PROVIDENCE.**

IV. DEEDS OF HEROISM AND FAITH. (Lessons I., II., IV., VII., X., XI., XII.) **SELF-SACRIFICE, MISSION LABORS.**

V. MUTUAL HELP. (Lessons II., IV., VII.)

VI. PUTTING AWAY EVIL. (Lesson V.)

VII. FAILURES AND IMPERFECTIONS. (Lessons V., IX.)

VIII. RELIGION IN DAILY LIFE. (Lesson XII.)

IX. RESOLUTIONS for the last Sunday of the year.

APPLICATION TO TEMPERANCE.

The work to be done in overcoming Intemperance and its colleagues, great enemies of man, and making the nation temperate and prosperous. Overcoming these enemies in each heart. Crossing the Jordan typifies the signing of the pledge, and entering upon a temperance life, and upon the temperance work. God gives his Holy Spirit, who has wrought some miraculous transformations in those who have been addicted to strong drink. We are defeated when we have aught to do with the accursed drink, and especially if we indulge in the drink habit in secret, contrary to pledge and profession. We should help one another in every way; often renew our covenant and promise, and live pure and happy daily lives, consecrated to God and his cause. Deeds of heroism and faith as great as those of Gideon and Samson are often required by those who are faithful amid adverse influences, and those enter the crusade against intemperance.

APPLICATION TO MISSIONS.

The work of subduing the whole world to become the kingdom of God. Consecration. God's wonderful works, seen in every mission. The greatness, the number, the cruelty of the enemies to be overcome, not by destroying, but by converting. There are needed deeds of heroism, of mutual help, and of faith. There will be final success.

A SUGGESTION FOR REVIEW.

The *Baptist Superintendent* suggests a written Review, by means of printed sheets with blanks like the following for each lesson. At the head of the sheet are given the following instructions:—

TO THE PUPIL.—1. You will receive this sheet on a Sunday previous to Review Day; keep it clean and neat. 2. If possible, recall from *memory* the answer to each question upon the Lessons, and write it out *in your own words*, as a rule. But refer to the Bible, if it is really necessary. 3. Complete the sentence at the close of each lesson by stating something that *you, yourself*, ought to *be* or to *do*, in view of what the lesson has taught you; always use “*I*,” and “*me*,” and “*my*,” instead of “*we*,” and “*us*,” and “*our*,” in writing this last sentence, which is called *the application*. 4. Return this sheet, *after filling all the blanks*, to your teacher, who will sign it and hand it to the superintendent for such use in the school as may be deemed best. 4. Will you not ask God to bless the truths of these lessons to your heart and life?

LESSON I.

CLASS NO. _____

TITLE: JOSHUA 1: 1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT:

Who became leader of Israel after the death of Moses?

What promise did God make to him?

What kind of a man must he be?

How should he use the Bible?

I have learned from this lesson that

.....

TEMPERANCE LESSON.

THE VOW OF THE NAZARITE.—NUM. 6: 1-4.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*—ROM. 12: 1.

TIME.—This law was given during the latter part of the Israelites’ stay before Sinai, B.C. 1490. It belongs about the time of Lesson IX., 3d Quar.

1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,	and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar
2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and	of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither
say unto them, When either man or woman	shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat
shall separate <i>themselves</i> to vow a vow of a	moist grapes, or dried.
Nazarite, to separate <i>themselves</i> unto the	4. All the days of his separation shall he
LORD;	eat nothing that is made of the vine tree,
3. He shall separate <i>himself</i> from wine	from the kernels even to the husk.

SUBJECT,—THE FIRST TEMPERANCE ORDER.

I. ITS NATURE (vers. 1, 2). (1) *Voluntary*. 2. When either man or woman shall separate *themselves*. It was entirely voluntary whether one should become a Nazarite or not. One forced to be a Nazarite would lose all the spiritual meaning and benefits, and keep only a dead form. So one should be a total abstainer from choice, or he will be like the inmates of a state prison who are compelled to abstain from all intoxicating drinks. Hence

when away from the restraint they return to their drink again. They have nothing of the strength, the character, the nobleness of soul which comes from voluntary self-denial. Like Paul, we should do nothing that will cause our weak brother to stumble. (2) **A vow.** A solemn engagement or promise, or the consecration of a person or thing to some particular use or service. **Vow of a Nazarite.** Heb., *nazir*, from the root *nāzar*, to separate, denoting one who was especially separated and set apart either by the act of his parents or his own, to the worship and service of God. — *Bush.* (3) *This vow was either temporary or for life.* (4) *It was a religious service.* It was to be to the Lord.

II. ITS PLATFORM. (1) Letting the hair grow without cutting. No razor, or scissors, or any other instrument was to come upon the head till the expiration of the vow, which was seldom less than thirty days. — *Bush.* This was the outward visible sign of the vow. So a public profession of one's position in religion and temperance is of great value to him who professes and to others. It gives strength and courage, it gives opportunity for example to have its effect, it honors and manifests the worthiness of the cause. (2) Avoiding the touch of a dead body, whereby pollution might be contracted. He was not at liberty to enter a house where a corpse lay, nor to follow it to the grave. — *Bush.* This was also required of the high priest. He was not even to touch the dead of his own household. This was to be a mark and type of perfect purity, from all that can defile body or spirit. (3) Total abstinence from wine and everything that could intoxicate, for

3. **He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink:** *Shekar.* Strong drink made from the juice of any kind of fruit. **Vinegar of wine, vinegar of strong drink:** implying acid fermentation. Both these drinks were forbidden because they had virtually the same intoxicating effect with the principal liquors themselves. **Liquor of grapes.** The import of the original is that of something macerated or steeped in water almost to solution. Grape-skins steeped in water after the juice is pressed out, form the drink here alluded to. — *Bush.*

4. **Nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels (or stones) to the husks (or outer skin).** As our drink was made from the stones of unripe grapes; and cakes were also made of the husks. — *Cook.* These were not dangerous in themselves, but were forbidden to keep those who had made the vow, from temptation, and to avoid every appearance of evil. "We are not only to avoid sin with the utmost care and caution, but everything that borders upon it and leads to it, everything that would serve as an occasion, or operate as a temptation, to it." — *Bush.* The Chinese have a proverb that one should not stoop down even to tie his shoe in a cucumber or melon garden; for those who looked on would be sure to think that he was plucking the fruit, however innocent he might really be. The application to temperance people is obvious.

III. ITS OBJECT. The vow of the Nazarite involved the dedication of a person to God, either temporarily or permanently, and implied in its own nature a peculiar aspiration towards a closer conjunction with heaven in the acts of piety and devotion than was ordinarily enjoyed by those who were occupied simply with the common routine of life and its duties. It was for the time being a separation from and a renunciation of the pleasures of the world, and of all fleshly gratifications and indulgences. Although we cannot fairly draw from this chapter an absolute prohibition of the use of wine, or of other worldly enjoyments of a harmless kind, yet we are taught from it to study a holy superiority to all the pleasures of sense as tending to subject the soul to the body, and thus retard our ascent to heaven. Though not required to abandon the world and its secular cares, yet we are required to "use the world as not abusing it," and to repose our burdens on the Lord. Though not called to that singularity of dress which marked the Nazarite to public view, yet neither are we called to be conformed to every idle fashion, or to run into all the absurdities which characterize the world. Though we are not to shrink from various contacts forbidden to the Jewish votary, yet we are to keep at the remotest distance from all moral pollution, in the profound dread of walking unworthy of our holy profession, and bringing dishonor upon the Lord's venerable name. Thus let us walk, and as the Nazarite, after his term of separation was fulfilled, "might drink wine," so, after the short period of mortification and self-denial here, we shall "enter into the joy of our Lord," even into "his presence, where there is fulness of joy and pleasures forevermore." — *Bush.* As by the Sabbath we are aided to make all days holy, and as by hours of prayer we can fill all hours with the prayerful spirit, so by this Nazarite vow we learn how holy and temperate all men ought always to be. We can give up even what might not harm us for the good of the world. Again the vow of the Nazarite contributes toward health of body and of soul. (See Lam. 4: 7). "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire."

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